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ABSTRACT

The following papers are included: "Valuing Change and Changing Values" (Armstrong); "Raybouldism, Russell, and New Reality" (Benn, Fieldhouse); "The Move to Self-Assessment" (Boud); "Hijacking Experience and Delivering Competence" (Bryant); "The Professional Development Model of APEL [Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning]--Some Problems of Assessment and Validity" (Butterworth); "Accreditation: The Strange Death of Liberal Adult Education" (Chase); "Scientific Ideals, Changing Culture, and Continuing Education" (Counihan); "People's Academics for People's Universities?" (Duke); "'Tribes' and 'Tribulations': Narratives and the Multiple Identities of Adult Educators" (Edwards, Usher); "Developing an Open Learning Framework for MPhil/PhD Research Training" (Fenwick); "Changes in Adult and Continuing Education in New Zealand Universities over the Last Decade" (Findsen); "What's in a Word? Education for Adults" (Daggett); "Making the Familiar Strange" (Hampton, Hampton); "Education in the Marketplace: From Education to Production" (Hillier); "The Dance of the Tumbleweed: Reflections on Establishing a Reflective Practice Tutor Group" (Hunt et al.); "Teaching, Learning, and NVQs [National Vocational Qualifications]" (Hyland); "Research and Practice: A Romantic Relationship?" (Jarvis); "Vision to Viability, Marginal to Mainstream, Freire to Foucault" (Johnston); "Researching Change--The FHE [Further and Higher Education] Act and Research in the Education of Adults" (Jones); "Changing Working-Class Women's Education" (Kilminster); "Identity, the Adult Learner, and Institutional Change" (Lea, West); "Reflective Practice: A Methodology for the Future of Organization Development" (Middling); "The Formation of Academic Identities" (Miller); "Through the Wall: Adult Education, Social Change, and New University Subjects" (O'Rourke, Croft); "Managerialism, Change, and Democratic Accountability" (Patel); "The Rise of Managerialism at the Expense of Academic Creativity and Innovative Development?" (Sisto, Hillier); "The Limitations of Theory" (Standish); "The Changing Role of the Professional in University Continuing Education" (Taylor); "Lost in Texts? The Adult Education Researcher as 'Reader' and 'Writer'" (Usher); "Human Capital in 'Modernising' China" (Wallis); "Suggestions about 'Special' Are Being Called For" (Watson); "Bungy Jumping the Bridge between Potential and Opportunity" (Watt); "What Women Want from Women's Studies in Adult Continuing Education" (Webb); "The Changing Undergraduate Culture" (Withnall); and "SCUTREA's [Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults] Metamorphosis" (Zukas). (YLB)

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Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults

Reflecting on changing practices, contexts and identities

Conference Proceedings

edited by
Paul Armstrong, Barry Bright
and Miriam Zukas

Papers from the 24th Annual Conference
University of Hull, 12-14 July 1994

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The Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults

SCUTREA is a forum for all concerned with research into the education of adults and those involved in the development of adult education as a body of knowledge. it began as an organisation with a membership consisting solely of university departments of adult education. SCUTREA now draws upon a broader constituency and welcomes individual and institutional members from across the international educational field. Adult education is a growing and fast changing sector and at this time SCUTREA provides a focus on the diverse interests of practitioners and researchers. It is a pivotal point in the adult education world in Britain, and is also linked to organisations in both the North and the South, enhancing members' access to international contacts.

The SCUTREA Annual Conference is a major event in the adult education calendar. In addition, smaller workshops, conferences and seminars are organised throughout the year, often jointly with other national organisations promoting the interests of adult continuing education research and practice. Members' research and teaching interests are linked through working groups which any member is welcome to join.

The dynamism of SCUTREA is reflected in the publications that have been generated from the working groups and conferences and the organisation has moved into an expansive period during the current decade. The organisation publishes a quarterly newsletter for its members.

Membership is open to individual and institutions who are accepted by its Council as 'making a contribution to the study of or research into any aspect of learning, education or training in adulthood'.

SCUTREA's Honorary Officers (1993-96) are:

Chair:	Miriam Zukas, Department of Adult Continuing Education, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT
Secretary:	Paul Armstrong, Haringey Education Business Centre, 336 Philip Lane, London. N15 4AB
Treasurer:	F. John Taylor, 6 Dukes Drive, Leicester. LE2 1TP

Editors' introduction

When the conference planning group met late last year to discuss the theme for this year's conference, our discussions kept returning to the many changes that we were facing in our working lives. In the light of our common experience, we decided to develop the theme of changes in practices, contexts and identities for the conference. In the call for papers, we wrote:

> 'The British Government recently announced that it had reached its target in expanding higher Education six years early, Those working in universities (both 'old' and 'new') are currently experiencing the impact of such rapid expansion. Those teaching and researching about the education of adults have particularly felt the winds of change as many of the areas of expansion are precisely the same as their research and teaching domains. Is this a time of opportunity or despair? What does the future hold for university teaching and research in the education of adults? What can we learn from other countries that have undergone similar experiences of mass education? What can others learn from the British experience?'

We invited colleagues to reflect on the changing context in which they were working. We asked them particularly to consider how this affected, and in turn was affected by, the changing practices of educators of adults and their identities as adult educators. We suggested a number of themes for papers including changes in accountability, cultures and ideologies, the design, delivery and assessment of teaching, professionalisation and research. Our selection of papers was based on the extent to which the abstracts were relevant to the conference theme, and demonstrated critical reflection, The thirty-five papers that make up these conference proceedings demonstrate the versatility of our contributors in adapting their research interests to such a theme. They also demonstrate the crisis of identity experienced by many adult educators, both in terms of professional allegiances and academic identities.

Several themes emerge from the papers and these are representative of the very concerns we were facing in the original planning group. The first, that of the changing profession of adult educators, is tackled in several ways. Within the context of the mainstreaming of continuing education, Chris Duke and Dick Taylor write about the changing roles of adult educators as professionals from their perspectives as managers of those changing roles, Ian Bryant and Rennie Johnston write more personally about the ways in which those changes affect their own academic and political identities. The theme of academic identity is taken up by Nod Miller in her paper about research on networks in the adult education community in Australia, while Richard Edwards and Robin Usher take a post-modern view of the multiple identities of adult educators, Robin Usher's paper on the adult education researcher as 'reader' and 'writer' pursues this post-modern theme about identities, while Paul Standish challenges such approaches in his paper on the limitations of theory.

Two papers concentrate on the impact of a changing social and political context on the education of adults, Brian Findsen describes the changing political context in New Zealand before discussing its influences on adult and continuing education. For those of us immersed in British problems, the paper offers a wider context for the changes we face. John Wallis also discusses the impact of a changing context on continuing education, although this time he focuses on economic issues. In his paper, he considers the impact of economic modernisation on the Chinese education system.

Four papers move outside the British university system and look at the impact of other legislative and organisational changes on the education of adults. Helen Jones discusses her research on the consequences of the Further and Higher Education Act in Britain for the education of adults, while Kirit Patel looks beyond the rhetoric of democratic accountability in local government training to the difficulties of implementing real changes which involve those with vested interests giving up power. Sheila Sisto and Dawn Hillier pick up the theme of managerialism in their paper on organisational change and give personal accounts of the costs of the introduction of a more managerial style within universities from their positions as senior staff. In contrast, Annette Middling looks at organisational change as organisational development and chooses the theme of reflective practice in seeking a methodology to enhance such development.

Another theme delineated in the conference papers is that of changes in teaching - that is, curriculum design, delivery and assessment systems. Terry Hyland and Sue Kilminster focus particularly on the new educational technologies of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) in their papers, while David Boud questions whether

the moves to self-assessment now seen across educational institutions will deliver the liberation for students that was once promised..

The more parochial concern of the accreditation of liberal adult education is, of course, raised in many papers, but three offer a comprehensive discussion of some of the issues. Malcolm Chase's paper reports on the findings of a pilot programme of accredited courses,, while Hazel and William Hampton ask us to retain the traditions of liberal adult education, particularly those of reflection, in whatever we end up doing after accreditation. Sue Webb concentrates on the impact of accreditation on women's studies students in her research with those students.

The development of women's studies represents one of a number of changes in the curriculum introduced initially within adult education. Rebecca O'Rourke and Andy Croft write about another - creative writing - while Christine Jarvis discusses her research on the use of romantic fiction as a medium for teaching on Access courses. Sheila Watt's paper focuses on yet another development which began within adult education - that of study skills courses and their recent inclusion in traditional undergraduate provision. In contrast, Martin Counihan looks at science which is traditionally considered difficult to teach in adult education and is usually seen as stemming from the academy rather than rising outside its walls. Two further papers focus on the development of new curricula for teaching research students. Angela Fenwick discusses her research on an open learning framework for research training and a group of four Masters tutors from Sheffield University (Cheryl Hunt, Catherine Edwards, Alison McKay and William Taylor) write about their experiences of trying to establish a reflective practice tutor group. The issue of assessment and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) has been a regular theme in conferences over the past three or four years, and this year the development of the model is taken further by Christine Butterworth and Michael Bloor in the context of practitioner theory and reflective practice.

Some of the papers concentrate on our changing ideas about learners, Alexandra Withnall looks particularly at the implications for research of a changing undergraduate population while Mary Lea and Linden West consider the consequences of institutional changes for adult learners and their identities, Peter Watson's paper draws attention to an under-represented group in adult education - those with special educational needs.

A final group of writers focus on the impact of 'The New Realism' for the values, ethics and practices of adult educators. Roseanne Benn and Roger Fieldhouse address this within the historical context of Raybouldism and Russell while Dawn Hillier considers the consequences of the current model of education as a market place. Paul Armstrong raises the timely question of whether there is a case for a code of practice for those teaching and researching about the education of adults, This will be followed up at the conference by a plenary session on values and ethics.

A conference about change would not be complete without some self-reflections and Miriam Zukas's paper and plenary session address the changes that SCUTREA itself has undergone over the last twenty-four years.

Thus, the proceedings reflect the disquiet and, in some cases, gloom of those working in our field. However, we believe that the range and quality of papers in these proceedings also demonstrate our ability to retain a critical, reflective and committed perspective while working within our changed circumstances. We are grateful to all the contributors and conference participants for sustaining our critical practice and our sense of worth in an antagonistic context and climate.

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Valuing change and changing values: is there a case for a code of practice in university teaching and research of the education of adults

Paul Armstrong
London Borough of Haringey

Change and its management

The conference is concerned to reflect on the winds of change blowing through British adult and continuing education in the higher education sector. It seems a long time ago that the dominant debates in adult education were about the nature and direction of change - from the liberal tradition to socialist alternatives. Left wing and mostly Marxist ideologies were presented as the folk devils of the past and future of adult and continuing education, at the time the source of radical changes and threats to the liberal tradition were coming from the New Right. Utopian conceptions of social change, recurrent from the nineteenth century through to the 1970s, have given way to a new concept of change, which links education more effectively to the needs of the economy, perceives students as clients with needs that have to be met, but within increasingly rationed resources, requiring efficiency and accountability. The phasing in of 'continuing', 'recurrent', and 'lifelong education' reflects the relocation of adult education from the margins to the 'mainstream', serving the major pre-occupations of the state, particularly the demand for 'relevance'. The liberal tradition has been subject to the demands of effectiveness, efficiency, and accreditation. And, if it had been, it was required to concern itself less with the oppressed and those with unequal access to educational opportunities. There are fewer opportunities to work towards a more just and equitable society where those inequalities are ever-widening. There is an imperative to concentrate more on putting the resource where there would be the biggest pay-off: continuing professional development.

The recognition of the rapid changes that are taking place in adult and continuing education, and more widely in the expansion of the higher education sector is reflected in the demand for the 'management of change'. This is a professional imperative high on the list of those involved in management development within public sector organisations in the 1990s. A far cry from the pre-1970s' demands for radical social change, managers are now required to lead their organisations and their employees through the process of change in a way that emphasises change as:

- positive
- an opportunity, not a crisis
- a collective activity
- a prime mover for business and source of growth
- something that needs investment in training and resources
- something to be managed.

From this perspective, change is *not*

- divisible from formulating and implementing corporate strategy
- random or purely adaptive, but planned initiatives towards a coherent strategic intent
- sudden and revolutionary, but gradual and incremental
- imposed from the top, but a shared responsibility
- disempowering
- separate from the need for competitive advantage
- without vision and direction
- inconsistent with the dominant ideology.

Training programmes in the management of change encompass the identification of the direction, sources and purpose of change, the articulation of choices, visioning change, the design and implementation of change programmes. This operates at a number of levels from the individual, through the organisational, to the cultural. Without exception, management of change programmes recognise the importance of developing the values and attitudes of individuals and organisation, to ensure consistency with the strategic intent[1].

Values in the context of change

Now values are defined as relatively enduring features of a culture. Without digressing too far into philosophical and psychological discussions on values, it is commonly accepted that changing behaviour is one thing; but changing attitudes and values is something else. In a manual on implementing total quality management through creating culture change, Atkinson[2] proposes the graph below to support his view that the introduction of a culture of quality will take time.

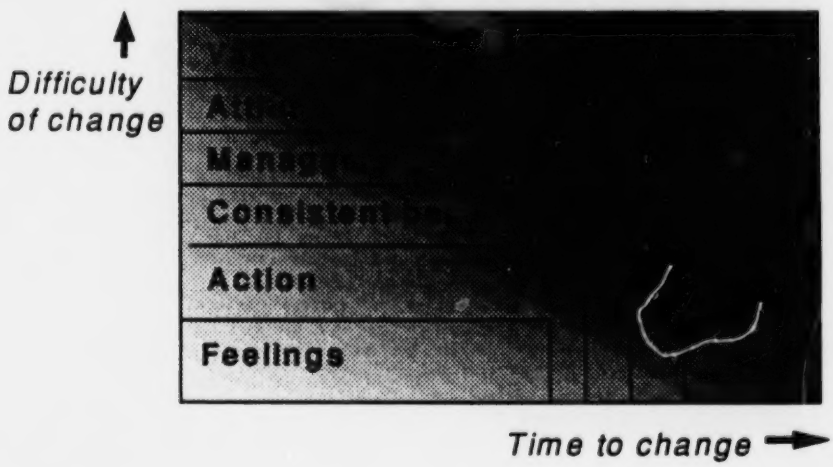
Values are the building blocks of culture, and it is the value system which predominates within an organisation. According to Atkinson, 'not many people give much thought to the key values but they are critical in helping to manage change'. Values are relatively stable, long-term, deeply-rooted and hard to change. Initially, it is a matter of identifying those values that are resistant to change; then predicting those organisational values which will be conducive to the changing culture, and then attempting to develop the appropriate attitudes and values that 'fit' the new culture. Alternatively, it could be argued, it is only when those deep-seated attitudes and values change, that the organisational or wider culture will change. The lack of fit may be between the old and new culture, or between individual and wider organisational or cultural values. Where there is a gap, individuals may distance themselves from their organisation or culture, rather than adjust their values.

It has often been assumed that education has performed an important function in terms of socialising young people and adults into a culture's value systems. Whether teaching is a repressive or a subversive activity, it inevitably involves the transmission of values. According to Eraut[3], an educator can handle values in three ways:

1. by assuming them or taking them for granted (implicit transmission)
2. by advocating them or refuting them and taking up a definite value position (explicit transmission)
3. by making them the subject of their teaching with the intention of promoting the students' awareness while still preserving their autonomy (explicit discussion).

The idea of promoting value awareness through explicit discussion is characteristic of liberal ideology. Adult educators should not impose their own values on students, but provide an opportunity for them to reflect on those that they hold already - not necessarily with a view to changing those attitudes and values. One suspects that a large amount of teaching does not focus on making students aware of values.

Taking up a distinct value position is dismissed as biased and lacking in objectivity This discussion applies equally to research as well as teaching. In the 1960s and 1970s there was a distinct emphasis on researchers confessing to their own values that are likely to have impinged on the research process. Liberal social researchers such as Howard Becker believed that the debate about value freedom was a myth, because all researchers held particular views that would shape their definition of the research problem, influence their methodology, constrain their analysis, and determine their reporting[4]. For



him and his colleagues, the answer was to simply expose their values to view, and allow them to be taken into account when reading the results of research. Becker was not prepared to go on to state any ethical canons to this effect, for he saw it merely as a matter of individual conscience or judgement.

As such values are not facts that are right or wrong; nor are they easily articulated. Value statements reflect our intentions, and most often determine not only what we do, but how we do it. In the case of total quality, it is recognised that to be successful, the organisation requires a cultural change that can only be brought about by significant changes in values as they determine behaviour. Where values are important to us they guide our conduct: we value what we do and we do what we value.

If we, our organisations, or our cultures are going to change, then we will need to value that change.

Values in a changing context

> 'In advocating change, values have to be made explicit, whereas values can more easily be taken for granted, or never made explicit when studying the reproduction of the current state of affairs. The explication of values is essential when advocating changes for other people, changes which they themselves will have to implement'.[5]

If we accept the thrust of Atkinson's argument that the implementation of total quality requires culture change, which will only be successful if attitudes and values change, then as researchers or practitioners involved in the change process our task is clear. As adult educators, whilst not seeing ourselves as merely agents that support the task of reinforcing existing social values and attitudes, we might accept that we do often seek to influence attitudes and values; indeed, this is at the very heart of the educative and learning process. Michael Eraut[6], as we have said, argues that whether teaching is seen as repressive or subversive, it always involves the transmission of values. If teachers are unaware of values, or refuse to problematise them, or feel they are beyond their professional responsibility, then we might have what Eraut calls 'value complacency'. Alternatively, teachers may intentionally make them explicit, advocating, refuting or taking up a particular value position. The third possibility outlined by Eraut, more characteristic of the liberal tradition, is that value awareness is raised as a teaching goal, by which values are explicitly discussed but not imposed by the teacher. As Eraut says, this may be the intention but difficult to achieve in practice.

Whether it is the teacher's intention to promote a particular set of values, or to raise students' awareness of issues related to values, there has to be a methodology for achieving this. In recent times, we have witnessed the drive towards competence-based teaching and learning. While much of the derivation of national occupational standards, using functional analysis, focused on skills and understanding, the dimension of values has not been neglected. Indeed, the development of functional analysis model did very much include an analysis of the 'environment' within which jobs are undertaken, and this did bring the issue of values and ethics into the foreground. This is now very much an issue in considering professional competence, particularly around how values and ethics might be analysed and then integrated into occupational standards[7]. Within the Care Sector Consortium, for example, efforts were made to identify and make explicit values, initially by embedding them in performance criteria and range statements, and later by developing the 'O' units which address the promotion of equal opportunities, protecting individual rights and responsibilities and acknowledging personal beliefs and identity. More recently, the draft Senior Management Standards developed through the Management Charter Initiative, have encompassed the analysis of values (*Unit C3: Culture; 3.3 Values in Work - Consult and provide guidance on ways in which values are to be expressed in work and working relationships*); the draft standards for Advice, Guidance and Counselling (*Unit A.4.4 Operate within an agreed ethical code of practice*); the Construction Industry Standing Committee standards (*F226.3 Contribute to the protection of individual and community interests).* There is a good deal of other work currently being undertaken with respect to values and national occupational standards of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

The point is that there is a methodology currently employed which has the capacity to reveal values and ethics. Every statement of competence identified should be a function; that is, a purposeful activity with a clear outcome. Values are intrinsic factors which motivate behaviour, and individuals will practice an occupation in order to realise they share certain values. Through this methodology, professional values are continually made explicit in the competence statements themselves. They are pursued in more depth through the use of critical incident analysis. And, of course, this is by no means the only methodology available for the identification and analysis of values.

An alternative approach recently promoted is that of an Ethics and values Audit (EVA), a tool designed for use by organisations in order that they might be able to analyse and evaluate themselves. It is undoubtedly a management tool that facilitates an examination and identification of shared principles and values, underpinning mission statements, charters and codes of practice or conduct. As Henry says, 'it can be seen as the first stage in the process for managing change'.[8]
On the market is another toolkit developed as a form of action research on behalf of Warwickshire County Council, which has enabled the local authority to get

> 'clear messages from staff about the organisational culture: what it is and what we need to do to change it. At the same time it has produced positive changes in the culture itself by asking each participant for a commitment to changes in their own behaviour. Staff now feel that the way things are is not just a product for senior management decisions, but about the way we all behave towards each other. It has given staff a say and a stake in the way the organisation works.'[9]

Supporting values through codes of practice
Of course, methodologies for the analysis of values might be deemed unnecessary in those professions where there exist statements or codes of ethics or practice. It is well recognised that a characteristic feature of a profession is that its members share common values, or adhere to published codes of practice. A recent trawl of professional bodies and organisations generated 27 codes of ethics or practice, most of which had been recently issued or revised and updated.. These codes take on quite different formats, from single paragraphs, marketing leaflets through to substantial books on rules and procedures. The format probably reflects the aims of the organisation issuing them, and the centrality of ethical issues to their practice.
Although the formats may vary, there is some similarity in terms of content. For example, the majority of codes examined had something to say about the following:

- professionalism
- conflict of interest
- maintaining competence
- reputation of the profession
- bribery and corruption

The beneficiaries of the codes are:

- the general public
- clients
- individual members

An interesting corollary of this has been the focus on the relationship between the professional and her/his colleagues. A code of ethics is often put forward as an agreement between the profession and the community, and putting the general public first may sometimes be to the detriment of the profession or colleagues in the profession. However, in practice it would appear that codes of ethics are more about protecting professional self-interest rather than the public interest. The failure of professional associations to come to terms with this has led to the emergence in Britain at the end of 1993 of a charity, *Public Concern at Work*, whose members are encouraged to 'blow the whistle' on malpractice at work.
There have been extensive surveys of professional bodies and their codes of ethics over recent years[10], reflecting the re-discovery of the significance of values to organisations. What does not come out of such surveys very clearly is how codes are agreed in the first place, and the level of consultation that has taken place among stakeholders. According to Kitson[11], most codes of ethics are developed from a defensive position by senior managers, with 'a prudential tone with some basis in utilitarian theory'. Whilst members affirm their commitment to such codes by signing up or accepting membership, and thereby agree to the disciplinary procedures put in place to deal with transgressions, there is little sense of their active involvement in the development and agreement of the codes in the first place. Indeed, research indicates that for some members it is not a matter of whether they agree with the code or not, for them it is simply not relevant, and if pushed on the subject, would probably concur with the view that such codes are in the interest of an organisation and its management, not its employees or its clients.
In undertaking research on behalf of The Local Government Management Board to identify the values of local government, the complexity of supporting values and ethics through codes has become apparent. In the case of those who work in local authorities, it appears that professional practice is determined by more than one set of values. An accountant working in the Education Department of a local authority, for example, in membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants will be obliged to follow the guide to professional conduct and professional ethics; at the same time, conduct will be governed by the local authority's corporate policies, and the Education Department's guidelines. In turn, we might expect those values contained in corporate and departmental policies to be influenced by traditional

values of local government. It is likely that the accountant is a member of a trades union such as Unison, and subject to their rules, procedures and guidelines. All these influences of course will be received according to the accountant's own set of personal values, which may or may not be congruent.

Similarly, in a university context, a lecturer may be subject to corporate, faculty and departmental policies, which may reflect traditional values such as respect for freedom of speech and free expression of ideas without fear or hindrance. However, in this case, there may be a difference. If the lecturer is an accountant, a chemist, a chemical engineer, an architect, a qualified social worker, a civil engineer, a doctor or lawyer, a sociologist, a psychologist, a counsellor, and in membership of a professional body, then she or he may have recourse to an external set of values and ethics. However, not all university lecturers will be in such membership. There is no agreed code for either teachers or researchers. To be sure, there do exist those codes that will be relevant to both teaching and research. For example, those involved in management training may pay heed to the code of practice published by management training organisations; those involved in training in counselling and in counselling skills would be covered by the code produced by the British Association for Counselling. Those involved in research could consult the code of practice published by either the British Sociological Association or the British Psychological Association, both of which relate quite directly to engaging in research activities. Alternatively, the Market Research Society has its own code of conduct, which has links to international codes of social research practice.

Sustaining professional ideology within the liberal tradition

So, should there be a code of practice to support university teaching and research in the education of adults? In a period of significant changes in universities where traditional extra-mural work is either being accredited or disappearing in favour of accredited continuing professional development programmes, university lecturers and researchers would appear to feel a degree of *anomie* or normlessness. A survey carried out with institutional and individual members of SCUTREA, generating 22 responses, suggests that very few of those who work in this sector have the support of a professional set of values to guide their teaching or research activities, and a number feel there is a void to be filled, particularly in carrying out educational research or engaging in practitioner research[12]. Most respondents were interested in the debate rather than the outcome. Indeed, there was considerable scepticism about the possibility that a code could be agreed, and even if it was that it would have very much impact.

The critical question that needs to be addressed is what set of values would such a code of practice promote? The history of the study of adult and continuing education has for over a century concerned itself with conservatism versus reformism, reformism versus radicalism, and radicalism versus conservatism. Whilst recognising broad ideological bases underpinning the education of adults, we must also be aware of the differences of perspective within each of these broad ideologies. There is the case to be made that the concern for a code of practice is itself a product of a particular ideology - that of liberalism. If this is so, is it inevitable that any such code of practice would merely reaffirm those values of previously dominant liberal ideologies, and that professional bodies or association promulgating codes of ethics are invariably resisting change, rather than demonstrating commitment to it?

Notes

[1] There is a growing number of books and training materials available on the management of change, including T. Peters, *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution*; London: Pan Books, 1989; R. Plant, *Managing Change and Making it Stick*; Aldershot: Gower, 1987; M. Woodcock and D. Francis, *Change: A Collection of Activities and Exercises*; Aldershot: Gower, 1992 ; Video Arts, *All Change (The Management of Change)*, videotape/book, 1988

[2] Philip E. Atkinson, *Creating Culture Change: The Key to Successful Total Quality Management*, Kempston: IFS Publications, 1990

[3] Michael Eraut, 'Handling value issues' in C. Adelman (ed), *The Politics and Ethics of Evaluation*, London: Croom Helm, 1984

[4] This debate on objectivity and the myth of value freedom, including the classic Becker versus Gouldner debate was featured in the paper by Kirit Patel, 'The politics of research: taking sides' in Nod Miller and David J. Jones (eds), *Research: Reflecting Practice; Papers from the 23rd Annual SCUTREA Conference*, University of Manchester, 1993

[5] J.A.Barnes, *Who Should Know What? Social Science, Privacy and Ethics*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979

[6] Eraut, op. cit.

[7] See, for example, C. Ennis, E.N.D.W. Lloyd and R. Patterson, Research and Development of a

Professional Competences Model, *Conceptual Issues Reports Working Paper No. 1 The Competences of a Professional* (Construction Industry Standing Conference, April 1993); *Working paper No. 2 Embedding the Professional Competences* (Construction Industry Standing Conference, May 1993); *Working Paper No. 3: Assessment* (Construction Industry Standing Conference, June 1993); S.D.Steadman, M.R.Eraut, G.Cole, and J. Marquand, *Ethics in Occupational Standards and S/NVQs: Seminar Paper*, 21/1/94; The Local Government Board, *Professional Development: Challenge and Change* (May 1993)

[8] Chris Henry, Professional Ethics and Organisational Change, paper delivered at *Professional and Business Ethics: Managing Organisational Change, First International Conference*, University of Central Lancashire, 14-15 October 1993; The EVA is promoted through the Centre for Professional Ethics, University of Central Lancashire.

[9] ABA Consultants/Warwickshire County Council, *Values: A Practical Approach to Understanding Organisational Values and Culture: User Guide* (November 1989)

[10] S.Webley, *Company Philosophies and Codes of Business Ethics: A Guide to their Drafting and Use*, Institute of Business Ethics, 1988; S.Webley, *Business Ethics and Company Codes: Current Best practice in the United Kingdom*, Institute of Business Ethics, 1992; D.J.Maine. Codes in Professional Institutes and Associations, paper delivered at *Professional and Business Ethics: Managing Organisational Change, First International Conference*, University of Central Lancashire, 14-15 October 1993

[11] Alan Kitson, Company Code of Ethics: The British Airways Case, paper delivered at *Professional and Business Ethics: Managing Organisational Change, First International Conference*, University of Central Lancashire, 14-15 October 1993

[12] H.Hampton and C.Hunt, Ethics and practitioner-research, in *Journal of Community Education*, vol. 7, no. 4; pp. 21-25

Raybouldism, Russell and New Reality

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This paper outlines some changes in philosophy and purpose in British university adult education over a period of nearly fifty years.

Raybouldism

Sydney Raybould was first Director of Extramural Studies at the University of Leeds between 1946-1969. During these 23 years he exercised a considerable influence on university adult education in Britain and overseas through his extensive writings and by his practice at Leeds. He is perhaps best remembered for his insistence on the maintenance of university 'standards'.

In the expansionist atmosphere after the second world war, Raybould consistently argued that universities should concentrate on one sector of adult education which they were uniquely qualified to undertake - i.e. adult education at a **university** level - leaving other equally valuable forms of adult education to other bodies better equipped to provide them. Associated with this argument was the notion of university 'standards'.

Raybould's *University Standards in WEA Work* (1948) contains all the essential Raybouldian arguments about 'standards'. In it he advised the WEA to make it clear to its students that university work entailed serious, disciplined study; regular attendance at classes; participation in seminar discussion; reading critically; and written work. He believed that the only way to combine open access with this level of adult education was to allow adequate time for development. University standards could really only be achieved by WEA students, many of whom had relatively little previous education, in tutorial classes of three years duration. Anything less would be a 'soft option' and lead to lowering of standards (pp.24-5).

It was also part of Raybould's strategy for maintaining standards that most of the teaching should be undertaken by university staff who were scholars and specialists in their particular subjects at this level, and who were not to be distracted from scholarship and research by too much developmental and organising work (ibid pp.27-9.). He introduced a number of other practical measures intended to improve quality.

Another contribution to the maintenance of high standards was the introduction of a policy for research in adult education (although this was at least as much geared to attaining academic respectability for extramural departments). By the late 1940s Raybould was advocating that extramural departments should become university departments of adult education and promote research into adult education as 'a distinctive field of study' (Raybould 1950 *passim*).

University extension certificates were introduced for students attending three-year extension courses. The standard was intended to be that of undergraduate degrees but care was taken not to prescribe the field of study by imposing a rigid syllabus. It was also a matter of policy that no attempt should be made to persuade any students to take the certificate examinations: the certificate was a voluntary option (Leeds *Annual Report* 1946-7 pp.5-6; 1955-56 p.9; Harrison pp.346-7).

Extension courses in a variety of technical and vocational subjects were introduced mainly for 'advanced students'. The first of these was in leather technology but a number of other scientific and technological subjects were soon promoted as well as 'aspects of probation work'. The Department's contribution to these courses was normally limited to assisting with the organisation and administration while academic responsibility lay with the appropriate 'internal' department (Leeds *Annual Report* 1955-56 pp.8, 21). This development was a shift away from traditional extramural work and can be seen as an early version of the continuing professional development and 'up-dating' which has more recently become a major part of universities' continuing education activity.

It can also be seen as a move away from operating exclusively 'beyond the walls' towards the University mainstream - something Raybould was very keen on in his quest for full academic parity for his Department and staff. In terms of conditions of service for staff, Raybould was successful in his quest, but in another attempt at mainstreaming he was thwarted. He proposed that the University should recommend to the Ashby Committee (set up in 1953 to review the organisation and financing of university/WEA adult education) that funding for extramural work should cease to come directly from the Ministry of Education but be transferred to the Universities Grants Committee (UGC). However, the University decided that it was more appropriate that adult education should continue to be funded separately by the Ministry, as did the

Ashby Committee (Leeds *Annual Reports* 1952-53 p.6; 1955-56 p.19; Ministry of Education 1954 pp.40-41).

Raybould had been immersed in the social purpose tradition of the adult education movement during his 'apprenticeship' in the Yorkshire North WEA, sharing the commitment to providing the working class with knowledge which could be used in the struggle for equality and industrial emancipation. But in the late forties and early fifties he exercised a major influence in emasculating this social purpose by giving greater weight to academic respectability and 'standards' which were often equated with 'objectivity' (a somewhat flawed concept built on his personal predilection for right-wing labourism). The specific commitment to the working class was replaced by a more nebulous commitment to the 'educationally disadvantaged' while 'knowledge for power' or for economic and industrial emancipation was discarded in favour of fostering attitudes of reasonableness and tolerance (Leeds 1950, *passim*; Fieldhouse 1985 pp.8-9; Taylor *et al* 1985 pp. 34-35).

Russell

Four years after Raybould's retirement the Russell Committee produced its report on adult education. (Department of Education and Science, 1973.) It rather evasively concluded that 'the criteria for deciding what is appropriate for university provision are not capable of precise definition and are a matter mainly for the universities to determine for themselves' but it did emphasise 'the need for adult education at a high intellectual level' and followed the Rayboulidian line in seeing no reason for a serious overlap between the universities' contribution to adult education and that of other providing bodies. However notions of pioneering, progression and transference of matured innovations to other agencies were used to justify lower level work.

This was given substance in the Report, where it described the kinds of work which it felt the universities should be grant-aided to undertake. It included the traditional extramural liberal studies and extension 'topping-up' of previous education, together with certain specialist functions that the universities had long been engaged in, such as 'role education' 'for groups whose common element is their role in society', and industrial education for management and trade unionists. But it also included developmental or pioneer work for which universities should receive pump-priming grants for a limited period only. This included 'work of an informal or pioneering character with disadvantaged sections of the population' and 'provision for adult access to graduation or other qualification at an advanced level' - in other words, access to higher education. The Committee specifically hoped that universities would explore this latter field energetically. (ibid, pp.72-3.)

The Report also recommended that universities should receive pump-priming grants for 'courses in new fields for professional or vocational groups, including refresher and post-experience courses' (thus anticipating later PICKUP pump-priming by about a decade), while accepting that most of this work should be self financing. (ibid , p.73.)

Russell echoed Raybould in urging universities to engage in the study and teaching of adult education as an academic discipline and to extend their research into the many facets of adult education. This was seen as an essential contribution to the training of full and part-time staff engaged in the education of adults. (ibid, pp.73-5, 133-38.)

Organisationally, the Report gave support to existing specialist extramural or adult education departments, but also to those universities which wished to integrate adult education more closely with their day-to-day teaching and research. (ibid, pp.74-6.)

The Russell Committee did not advocate transference of responsibility for funding university adult education from the DES to the UGC, favoured by Raybould twenty years earlier. This was because it followed the Ashby Committee line in regarding university adult education as part of the total adult education service rather than part of higher education. Therefore it recommended the continuation of the direct grant from the DES to the universities for their work in adult education. (ibid, pp.71-2.)

The New Realism

The New Right thinking about higher education is laid out in the White Papers of 1987 and 1991. In the 1987 White Paper *Higher Education: meeting the Challenge*, of the three stated aims and purposes of higher education, two concern the economy and only one concerns research and scholarship (DES 1987 p.iv). Access is defined to mean 'taking account of the country's need for highly qualified manpower'. This thinking is confirmed in the 1991 White Paper *Higher Education: a New Framework* which reaffirms these aims and purposes of higher education and policies on access and reinforces the manpower role by promising 'continuous education from the age of 5 and throughout working life' (DES 1991 p.3). This emphasis on continuing education for vocational purposes has received substantial financial support from the Training, Enterprise and Education Directorate (TEED) through the funding of over 60 substantial projects and the PICKUP initiative (TEED 1990). However neither these nor the Enterprise in Higher Education initiative

identify a particular role for adult education. This work is seen as the remit of the university as a whole.

The concept of university adult education as part of higher education rather than the total adult education service, linking with Raybould rather than Russell or Ashby, is reinforced in the Circulars from the HEFCE describing the Council's decisions on its approach to the funding of continuing education (HEFCE 1993; 1994). Whilst continuing the allocation of specific funds to the development of continuing vocational education, the Council has decided to mainstream funding for non-vocational continuing education. Tied in with this is the priority to be given to provision which fits in to the university's award-bearing structure. The Council also announced that funds previously earmarked for continuing education research should be included within the mainstream funding method for research. As a result of these new funding arrangements, most continuing education students will be formally registered students of the universities and as such indistinguishable from most other students. The courses they attend will carry the same currency structure as that of the rest of the university's provision, the quality assurance mechanisms will be the same and academics will have the same conditions of service as their non-continuing education colleagues. In theory at least, there will no longer be an issue of 'standards'. University continuing education will truly be mainstreamed. Raybould will have been vindicated.

Conclusion

The journey embarked upon by Raybould fifty odd years ago is now complete. Continuing education should at last be assured of that elusive goal - academic respectability. But, and there is always a but, there has been a cost. For many years, social purpose was the main dynamic of the adult education movement. As recently as 1985, it was possible to comment that although pressures for education to reflect more closely the relevant needs of the economy had further eroded social purpose, it was still a fundamental part of the tradition of university liberal adult education (Taylor *et al* 1985 p.44). But mainstreaming will involve the adoption of the priorities of the institution and these are usually expressed in terms of research, teaching, scholarship and the socio-economic needs of the local community and country rather than the social purpose to which the adult education movement was for so long committed. Universities have not traditionally seen their role as being about social change for various reasons including elitism and perhaps fear of political involvement. The new funding mechanism will ensure that continuing education falls into line. In addition the funding pressures of research selectivity exercises and accreditation together with ongoing demands of teaching and organisation will reduce the time and energy left for development and innovation. The new realism may have simultaneously ensured 'standards' for university continuing education and brought about the end of adult education as a social movement.

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The move to self-assessment: liberation or a new mechanism for oppression?

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Over the past fifteen years I have been involved in introducing self-assessment practices into courses in higher education in a variety of ways. While this was relatively easy to do in my own teaching, the challenge I faced was how I could help others do it in the context of their own subjects and local departmental constraints. There was a great deal of enthusiasm from some staff and we were successful in implementing self-assessment in undergraduate courses ranging across law, engineering, education and architecture. Accounts of these were published at the time in specialist journals, but overall there was little interest in these ideas beyond those with whom I or my colleagues had direct contact.

My academic interests shifted and I moved away from a post which involved me with academic colleagues throughout the university into the mainstream of training adult educators. I returned recently to the area of self-assessment to explore what was currently happening, not least because I was using it in my own teaching. However, when I did so I realised that the wider picture had changed substantially. No longer was self-assessment an isolated practice engaged in by a committed few, but, especially in the UK, it was being considered as a key element in Enterprise and Capability initiatives and regarded, not as strange and part of the innovative fringe, but as a practice to be widely commended. Although I was heartened by this, I was also puzzled by how an idea which is potentially so challenging to the status quo could apparently be so readily accepted.

The concept of self-assessment

Before proceeding further, however, it is necessary to define self-assessment and indicate the contexts in which it has been used. The defining characteristic is:

> 'the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work, and making judgements about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards' (Boud 1991).

The significant aspect of this definition is that it goes beyond the idea of allocating marks into the engagement of students with questions concerning what quality work means in any given area. Such a definition does not imply that self-assessment should occur in isolation; it normally involves drawing upon the criteria and judgements of others, but leaves decision-making in the hands of the student. Not all documented examples of self-assessment meet this standard, and it is often in the extent to which they fall short in this regard that difficulties arise.

Motives for the introduction of self-assessment are complex; they include both the educational and the expedient. It is clear that the ability to self-assess is a core educational skill which is necessary for lifelong learning and which it is desirable to develop as part of higher education. However, it can also provide the opportunity to reduce staff workload. If staff can use their time more productively by not marking the same question time after time and year after year, it is argued they will be less stressed and able to devote their time to more useful things, hopefully related to student learning.

Adult students and assessment

My rekindled interest in assessment also led me to consider other changes which had been occurring over the same period. One is the massive shift of adult students from the informal adult education sector into formal higher education. The numbers of such students in both Australia and the UK has risen dramatically over the past fifteen years, and traditional extra-mural provision has appeared to decline in step with the opening of access to courses for credit.

The role of assessment in informal and formal contexts differs markedly and students pay a price for operating in the formal system. They move from a situation in which decisions about learning goals, study programs and assessment of outcomes is influenced significantly by themselves, to one in which these are, by and large, defined and imposed by others. In part this is desirable and just what they want—to be measured against the prevailing community standards in any given area—but at a deeper level, because of the generally unsophisticated conceptions of assessment which are widespread (Boud 1994), they are inducted into a dependency culture in which the decisions of others count for far more than their own assessments.

While there have been increasing numbers of adult students enrolling alongside school leavers and participating in relatively unchanging teaching practices, there have been counter developments which involve the promoting of increased student responsibility for learning. There has been a

noticeable increase in activities which take a student-centred approach and which involve students in making significant decisions about their work. These include an emphasis on project work, the use of learning contracts and negotiated learning and various profiling initiatives.

Liberation or oppression?

In revisiting self-assessment it was noticeable that, like many other related innovations, it was taking root now less in the heart of traditional subjects, where I had previously been working, but in areas such as communication projects, work-based learning, and new process-oriented subjects (the areas using learning contracts as described in Stephenson and Laycock, 1993 provide a good example of this range). In the UK, self-assessment appeared not only to be more widespread than in Australia, but was a central part of the Enterprise in Higher Education agenda. While it was encouraging to see many more examples in practice, the question remained of how much would be sustained when the money and the specific external impetus for change disappeared? Would there really be a shift in the balance of power in the direction of students? Indeed, to what extent was that ever a motive of the staff involved. Self-assessment as defined here demands such a shift, but to what extent was it being contained and used to give the impression of a student-centred approach?

Rather than attempt a definitive answer, I wish to share my initial thoughts on a framework which can be used to help us make judgements about whether particular self-assessment practices are liberatory or oppressive. The question considered is: under what circumstances might self-assessment act to allow students to take more responsibility for their learning and in what circumstances might it do the opposite?

A given innovative practice is rarely intrinsically progressive or liberatory. Any strategy can be conceived of or implemented in such a way that its impact will be reduced or the status quo preserved. We can easily be blind to the ways in which our good intentions have been co-opted by others. What matters is not only the initial motive for introduction and the conception itself, but the small decisions that are necessarily made on a day-to-day basis in order that any teaching and learning activity might 'work' satisfactorily in practice. Any desired innovation can be derailed or subverted during implementation so that the needs of staff rather than students are met. In viewing an innovation at a distance it often very difficult to discern these subtle shifts which have large consequences.

The table below has been prepared to summarise my observations and interpretations about self-assessment practices in higher education. Having designed, inspected and read accounts of a large number of self-assessment approaches in Australia, the UK and elsewhere (amounting to a total of around two hundred), I have reflected on the features which seem to me to make a difference between a liberatory and an oppressive situation. For simplicity's sake, the table presents a polarity between two positions. In most contexts the situation will be far from clear cut and a careful judgement will need to be made to determine whether or not the process, given the unique environment in which it operates, is sufficiently open.

When self-assessment is introduced with the characteristics listed in the second column, it can be relatively ineffectual. This makes it no less oppressive however, as all teaching and assessment practices either contribute towards improving learning or inhibit it. Any additional requirement on students which does not significantly assist them is burdensome and should be avoided.

Consequences

The introduction of self-assessment needs to be planned carefully and the consequences explored thoroughly. It is not simply a strategy which can be read about and instantly applied with success. There are dynamics of power within courses and between staff to be considered. The introduction of self-assessment and other student-directed activities can destabilise existing teacher-student relationships and require a reappraisal of the goals of courses and the working practices of staff. Students will wonder why there is not a more direct relationship between course outcomes and how they are assessed, they will be mystified about why staff give so little feedback when they appear to spend so much time marking, and they will tend to question assessment practices in other subjects when they become more aware of how to interpret academic standards and demonstrate them in their own work.

Self-assessment demands a change of focus in staff activity away from the structuring of examinations and the marking of assignments towards the setting of assessment tasks and management of the assessment process. Greater emphasis normally needs to be given to the relationship between assessment tasks and overall course outcomes, to the processes of involving students in assessment, to preparation of guidelines to aid students in making assessments and to being explicit about what excellent work really looks like. A clear and frank appraisal of the context of learning is required and the implications for students and

Self assessment: tends to be liberating when:	**tends to be oppressive when:**
the motive for its introduction is related to enhancing learning	it is related to meeting institutional or other external requirements
it is introduced with a clear rationale and there is an opportunity to question it	it is treated as another part of course requirements
learners are involved in establishing criteria	learners are using criteria determined solely by others
learners have a direct role in influencing the process	the process is imposed on them
it makes an identifiable contribution to formal decision-making	no use is formally made of the outcomes
it is one of number of complementary strategies to promote self-directed and interdependent learning	it is tacked on to an existing subject in isolation from other strategies
its practices permeate the total course	it is marginalised as part of subjects which have low status
staff are willing to share control of assessment and do so	staff retain all control (sometimes despite appearances otherwise)
qualitative peer feedback is used as part of the process	it is subordinated to quantitative peer assessment
it is part of a profiling process in which students have an active role	records about students are produced with no input from them
activities are introduced in step with the students' capabilities in learning-how-to-learn	it is a one-off event without preparation

Table 1. Liberatory and oppressive factors in self-assessment

colleagues considered. If done sensitively with detailed preparation, quite radical and liberating innovation can be instigated in the most unlikely of contexts (Cowan 1988). If self-assessment is taken off the shelf, or in response to an external agenda, it can easily founder and sometimes discredit those who introduced it.

The success of self-assessment is not just a function of the interest and commitment of staff. A suitable environment for students requires that staff be operating in a context in which they are able to operate sufficiently autonomously and in which there can be open and vigorous discussion of educational issues. Quality courses are rarely produced in a climate which is not supportive of staff. The question arises of the extent to which any meaningful self-assessment could be introduced into some contexts: some may be so intrinsically oppressive—to staff and to students—that consideration of self-assessment would be a sham.

Self-assessment, and indeed other approaches to teaching and learning which require students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, involves risk. Parts of the mechanism of control by staff of students are shared with students and, in these circumstances, staff have to have confidence in themselves and in their colleagues that this will not act to their own disadvantage. It is ironic that we are currently seeing a climate in which there is encouragement for such developments, while, simultaneously, pressures towards definable outcomes and accountability are leading to a more rigid specification of academic work. Handling such contradictions is not easy, but it is increasingly becoming a normal part of the life of those who work in higher education.

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Hijacking experience and delivering competence: some professional contradictions

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Few adult educators would disagree with the proposition that over the past two decades our practices have become much more 'governed' than hitherto. How are we to account for this and what are the effects? In seeking explanations of the ways in which we are experiencing an unprecedented amount of daily control over our professional activities, I find two linked ideas - Foucault's notion of 'governmentality' and Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' - useful analytical tools. This paper offers a first sketch of how these ideas may be drawn upon. Taking as examples of how experience and competence are constituted, I try to illustrate how it is that we are implicated in the kinds of practice about which I presume many of us have severe reservations. The effects of governmentality are felt locally and personally; one such effect is that an increasing strain is placed on the operation of collegiality. Since SCUTREA seems to me to represent one of the few sites of collegiality left in the profession, I hope members will allow me a concluding parochial reflection which may well resonate with their own.

We are in the Panopticon. 'A particular rationality accompanies the panoptic technology, one that is self-contained; and untheoretical, geared to efficiency and productivity'[1]. This is the 'mentality' of 'governmentality' whereby 'a vast documentary apparatus becomes an essential part of normalising technologies'[2]. We are all party to the reproduction of such technologies in our daily paper-pushing.

One of the problems of coming to grips with Foucault's ideas on 'governmentality' is the conventional view we have of government as the operation of the state over and above society, imposing a politics, an ideology 'from without' as it were. Foucault invites us to consider the all-pervasive character of 'governmentality' as something that in constituting our subjectivity, and in shaping and reproducing our practice, we contribute to directly. Disciplines are crucial here: they occupy a strategic place as discursive forms of the 'will to truth'. 'Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, with the knowledge and power they bring with them'[3]. Disciplines, in Sheridan's words, 'bind individuals to certain types of enunciation'[4]. We now have many ways of enunciating our practice that could not have been foreseen twenty years ago. We are in the Panopticon - incorporated, mainstreamed, surveyed, bottom-lined.

Speaking of the programmatic character of the Panopticon, Foucault notes that 'we are dealing with sets of calculated, reasoned prescriptions in terms of which institutions are meant to be reorganised, spaces arranged, behaviours regulated'[5]. This programming depends on the operation of a particular form of rationality - 'governmentality'. It is an instrumentalist view of how things work administratively[6]. Foucault is important for the way in which he links the operation of power to the constitution of subjects - for example the way in which adult learners have come to be constituted for the purposes of certification.

How are subjects made? By dividing practices - 'the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others'[7]. The process of division is accomplished by modes of classification and categorisation employed as much by academic disciplines in the name of understanding as by administrations for the purposes of disposal. And by confessional practices - whereby subjects are active accomplices in their own self-formation. Foucault is not interested in the truth or falsity of what disciplines say so much as in discovering how they achieve their discursive effects. He rejects questions of sovereignty in favour of questions about mundane administration. Government is about questions of marshalling resources in order to know more about a population, to subject it to the all-encompassing gaze, and to have it keep a watchful eye on itself. He brings the matter down to our daily practices and routine collusions.

Foucault makes much of the ambiguity of the notion of 'subject' as one who both knows (as the carrier of experiences) and is known (as a product of discourse) in particular ways. Governmentality operates through particular disciplinary practices, especially that of the examination (not just in the sense of sitting exams, but a multiplicity of procedures for overseeing and rendering

accountable the actions of subjects). The idea of examinability joins dividing and confessional practices. The framework for exploring particular educational practices is supplied by Foucault in terms of an 'analytic grid of power-knowledge'[8]. We are now required, as a condition of practice, to constitute education and ourselves in particular ways and to be constantly monitored while so doing.

The examination is a technique which is not just divisive, but which works to constitute subjects' own selfhood in the guise of a confession - this includes even the apparently liberating and progressive use of the idea of 'reflective practice' as self-examination. Hoskin remarks that 'Foucault himself named examination (which we can now see is a quintessentially educational practice) as the key that simultaneously turns the trick of power (discipline) and knowledge (the disciplines) in the modern epoch'[9].

Governmentality is about the operation of local practices. Micro-technologies of control and normalisation 'bring together the exercise of power and the constitution of knowledge, in the organisation of space and time along ordered lines, so as to facilitate constant forms of surveillance and the operation of evaluation and judgement'[10]. Ask yourself: 'in how many ways am I now accountable, and how much time do I spend accounting for what I do during the rest of it?'

The key to governmentality is 'the self-regulating capacities of subjects, shaped and normalised through expertise'[11]. It is governmentality that constitutes subjects as 'competent', 'credit worthy' or 'experienced'. The operation of governmentality is apparent through 'programmes of conduct which have both prescriptive effects regarding what is to be done .. and codifying effects regarding what is to be known'[12].

Experience is hijacked as currency. Practical guides to the conduct of accrediting prior experiential learning (APEL) see its value in cash terms, by way of 'spending' credits. The only experiences worth having are those which are so accredited. As Challis for example assures us, the system can only work if experiences are 'brought into the planning equation'[13]. Furthermore, the key to APEL is seen to be the management of evidence of competence - the only 'evidence' that matters. Experience is delivered as competence in the guise of choice[14].

But as Edwards and Usher view it, 'competence - based education and training can ... be seen as a strategy of governance'[15]. The governance of adult education works because we have subjected ourselves to this new regime of 'truth'.

The effect of governmentality is to make our practices more programmatic, which is to say subject to systematic analysis and prescription. Ineffable qualities - 'experience', 'competence', even 'quality' itself - are operationalised. Such practices 'crystallise into institutions, they inform individual behaviour, they act as grids for the perception and evaluation of things'[16].

We 'know' about experience, competence, etc. not just by their indicators, but by knowing how to deal with them (subject them to measurement, assessment, evaluation). This is programmatic knowledge: these 'things' become the means by which they are appraised and administered. Teaching and learning become the way they are examined.

The personal and routine effects of governmentality can be appreciated by using Bourdieu's idea of 'habitus'. Habitus is a system of dispositions, a scheme of practice and perceptions, an embodiment. Through habitus, we 'produce on the appropriate occasions skilful social activity that embodies, sustains, and reproduces the social field that in turn governs this very activity'[17]. Such governing determines 'what possibilities show up as making sense'[18]. Habitus focuses on how practices are formed and how they work. Practices work by 'working' their authors. As Brubaker puts it, 'the habitus determines the manner in which problems are posed, explanations constructed, and instruments employed'[19].

Official expectations sit uneasily with subjective tensions. On the one hand I may 'know' that I'm a competent practitioner (colleagues and students tell me so), but on the other hand I'm at a loss as to how to demonstrate this in terms of the competencies that seem to be required of me in order to adapt to the brave new regime. 'A speaker's feelings of competence, of ability to meet the perceived requirements of public, official language, will vary ... with personal tension increasing as distance from the dominant code, and hence presumed incompetence with the dominant language, increases'[20].

What of us then, in the Panopticon? We are not to be trusted. A sense of 'fatedness' attaches itself to the way we are now forced to work[21]. There are new figurations of 'learning' - outcomes that are chartered or accredited as 'competence'. The only research considered to be worthwhile must find something ever new, something more, be something that is 'contracted' by a sponsor and brings in the money. It produces more text that begets text that libraries cannot hold. There's the hollow optimism of ever-new 'initiatives'. We cannot imagine teaching except as the management and delivery of learning, through

constituting learners in ways which allow them to be administered. We cannot think of any practice except in terms of a means-end calculus. It becomes increasingly difficult to imagine educational programmes except in terms of a balance sheet of accredited FTEs. In these new figurations, we are re-disposed as a different kind of practitioner.

I have a problem which I am sure many share of knowing how to frame what the practice of university adult education is becoming. It is partly the problem of any sense-making self, a problem of embodiment. As an individual I have a problem with my own becoming - something uncomfortably different from what I thought I was - a problem of representation and re-presentation. I have to try to make sense of these changes at the same time as knowing that in sustaining the habitus and contributing to governmentality I embody a form of alien practice. This is a personal and also a professional contradiction.

By way of a pessimistic conclusion - under the present circumstances, with a mortgage to pay and kids to raise, I don't know how to respond except by a counter-polemic such as this or by retreating into the hermeneutics of suspicion, working an ever-narrowing margin. To paraphrase Welton [22] - we have vivisected the nightingale and now we have no song, just a discordant recitation; and Fraser[23] - we have 'pinned down' experiential learning and it cannot fly. Is there still some hope? It may be that liberal values now cut no ice, reason is swallowed by prescription, and notions of authenticity seem unrealistic. But experience and everyday life continually resist attempts at classification and control. Society is not (ultimately) a manageable project; too much damage has been done under the assumption that it is. Given this, is it still possible to teach or to be a learner in an enjoyable game, to cut across the field and take the road not taken, to have a lucid theory of learning, to celebrate the taking of risks and the raising of awkward questions, to recover an authentic voice for our profession?

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The professional development model of APEL - some problems of assessment and validity

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Education professionals on in-service courses are one group of practitioners who come into higher education with previous work experience that can be used to base APEL claims on. The School of Post-Compulsory Education & training at Greenwich developed an APEL system for such candidates, using a developmental model of the APEL process. (Bloor & Butterworth 1990). This requires that the candidate should produce, in addition to evidence of learning, a reflective account (in writing or at interview) that analyses and evaluates those experiences. The act of producing this account means the candidate must review their learning and relate it to their own professional development. This takes their understanding of those experiences beyond the point at which they began the APEL claim, hence the 'developmental' value of such a reflective commentary.

The Greenwich APEL system was designed to be consistent with models of experiential learning (Kolb 1984, Boud et al 1985) that emphasised the importance of reflection. Since Schon (1991) learning theorists have been identifying the distinctive characteristics of experiential learning, a concern that Usher has pointed out (1989) coincides with the demographic change that made mature learners (who may lack qualifications, but do not lack experience) a desirable constituency for higher education. The requirement for reflection in our APEL process made it particularly suitable for our candidates, who were choosing a course in order to further their professional development.

Models of experiential learning mentioned above follow the 'reflection' stage of learning with one of 'conceptualisation', during which the individual analyses the particular experience in terms of more general categories which make possible the transfer of the original learning to new contexts. Accordingly, the Greenwich APEL process asks candidates to produce a reflective account that is analytical rather than merely descriptive. Since all our candidates are seeking advanced standing on professional awards, (all of whose curricula contain theoretical material), they are asked to perform part of this analysis using some current theoretical concepts from relevant fields. Feedback from our APEL candidates has shown how difficult some of them find this task; A specific difficulty is bridging the gap between their personal understanding of what happened and the kind of account we ask them to make. Such people may experience the APEL procedures just as Usher's (*op cit*) critique defines them: 'mechanistic, time-consuming and potentially demoralising'

We have always been conscious that, for some candidates, it is our requirement that they should use published research as a source of concepts to illuminate their accounts of practice that presents problems. Some experience this as an impediment to achieving understanding, rather than a support for it. For such candidates the apparent 'openness' of APEL is a promise never realised: what they experience is closure, a selective process of higher education reasserting itself, social control rather than empowerment.

The purpose of this paper is to re-examine in particular the place of theory in these reflective accounts in order to test the *validity* of our requirement. We want to look more closely at the act of reflection in the context in which we operate, and to examine how successful and unsuccessful candidates perceive theory. Although the particular focus of our concern is APEL, our discussion raises issues that are relevant to all professional courses that now claim to incorporate 'reflection'. Our paper raises general questions about the role of 'formal' as opposed to 'practitioner' theory (Usher & Bryant, 1987) in reflective accounts, and the different ways in which tutor/advisers act as intermediaries in the production of these accounts. This is taking up Kemmis's (1985) agenda for studying reflection: that it should be studied in the social context in which it happens, and that the values and intentions of those involved should be identified.

The debate about practitioner knowledge

Following Schon, there has been a debate about the epistemological basis of practitioner knowledge. The technical-rational view of professional knowledge was the basis of initial training for education professionals (on the 'learn-first-then-go-and-apply' model). It has been criticised by learning theorists on the grounds that the relationship between theory and operational contexts is more complex than one of simple 'application', and work such as that of Eraut (1990) has given us a more detailed account of different kinds of knowledge underlying action.

The technical-rational split between theory and practice was embodied in institutions by a status

differential between abstract theoreticians, the guardians of 'pure' knowledge, and 'mere' practitioners, whose task was simply to solve problems. The inhibiting effect of this status divide on practitioners as learners cannot be underestimated.

On philosophical grounds the criticism of the technical-rational approach is that in education in particular, competing theories and conflicting values mean that the relationship between means and ends is always problematic. Simple application of rules is never possible. Each individual practitioner will always make sense of the context, and interpret its demands, in terms of their own personal concerns, values and frameworks of understanding.

Post-Schon, terms such as 'theories-in-use' and 'reflection-in-action' have been coined by those seeking to eradicate the divide between the acquisition and application of knowledge. This view of knowledge being constituted and reconstituted during practice is shared by the advocates of action research who want to see knowledge creation 'owned' by practitioners. Usher (in Bright 1989) argues that the practical needs to be seen as a realm of knowledge in its own right, and he distinguishes 'practitioner' or 'informal' theory (the knowledge and understanding which is created in a particular context) from formal theory (the universal knowledge embodied in disciplines and available as general frameworks of understanding.) Informal theory is created through practice, and is the result of the interaction between the practitioner's experience and the cognitive models they use to structure their interpretation. In this view, practitioner theory has the status of a discourse in its own right.

This view of informal theory is similar to the model proposed by G Kelly's Personal Construct Theory, which posited each individual as a meaning-maker. According to Kelly (1955) each person erects for themselves a model of their world in terms of personal constructs. This model is subject to change since these constructions of reality are constantly tested out and modified to allow better predictions. The problem with informal or practitioner theory is that it is privately experienced (frequently intuitive and therefore unknown) and often it is dependent for its meaning on the context in which it was generated.

It may also, as Jarvis (1994) points out, be essentially conservative and inflexible unless it is interrupted by incidents stimulating reassessment. Again there are parallels with contemporary applications of personal construct theory to education (e.g. Pope & Keen 1981, Harri Augstein & Thomas 1991) which all stress the importance of initially making explicit the person's own construction of reality or frame of reference. This is one purpose of the reflective account which we ask an APEL candidate to provide. Kelly also stresses the role of significant others (such as an APEL counsellor) in helping the person extend and elaborate this frame of reference.

Assisting the production of practitioner theory in reflective accounts

This process of elaboration and reorganisation of a person's existing construction of informal theory is achieved at Greenwich by our use of an APEL counsellor who through dialogue interrupts and challenges routine construing and encourages the applicant to experiment with formal theory from educational literature to review, and reconsider their practice.

The first task for the APEL applicant is to use their curriculum vitae to help them identify areas of professional experience they could focus on for an APEL claim, they must match this against our general criteria for Professional Development on different awards. Candidates help each other to identify relevant areas of experience in a supportive, peer group atmosphere. To some extent we have found this frees them from the inhibiting effect of the status differential between the practitioners of theory and practice.

They are then asked to formulate their learning claims from the experiences, and write a reflective commentary on their professional experience. They must articulate their informal or practitioner theory in this account, i.e. produce a situated and context-specific account of the professional experience, this is not always an easy task. We ask that this account be written in the first person as we feel that this enhances ownership, the personal nature of practitioner theory. It also has the effect of distancing this activity from the writing of formal essays.

The facilitation of the transition from practitioner theory to the conceptualisation stage is the second major role of the APEL counsellor, who must help the candidate to articulate and convert an internal remembered narrative of personal experience into 'logico-scientific mode' characterised by explanations that use formal theory to critically evaluate their practitioner theory.

The purposes of formal theory in reflective accounts

We have three main reasons for asking that candidates relate their personal reflection to relevant current research and theoretical work in their field. Firstly, we believe that formal theory has an important role to play in validating, and possibly challenging personal accounts. It should also help the learner generalise their learning from the initial context, assisting transfer. Secondly, their accounts of professional activity can be compared with coursework assignments produced by students following the study-based awards. Since these APEL candidates are seeking credit for advanced standing, comparability is an important aspect of the standards question. Lastly, we believe becoming acquainted with the main current

theories and conceptual debates is part of professional socialisation.

Our experience has shown that how candidates perceive this requirement does not always support their learning. Some candidates, as Usher (1993) points out, see formal theory as an external voice undermining their own accounts. The counsellor, in making this demand, is seen to be acting in the interests of an institution that they fear wants to keep them out.

Many mature students without recent study experience find theoretical texts mystifying and intimidating. If the counsellor is unsuccessful in helping to link the candidate's perspective with that of the formal theoretical text, this appears to confirm their failure to learn. More practised students may have learnt to play the system and know how to mention theory without actually using the concepts to change their own understanding. (This is the surface versus deep learning contrast described in Entwhistle.). For them it is merely part of the ritual behaviour they must display to succeed. The technical-rational theory-practice gap is alive and well and lives in such accounts.

In a successful dialogue the counsellor will hope to be able to help the candidate become aware of such problems and find a way of overcoming them.

The relationships between these different purposes can be represented by the following diagram:

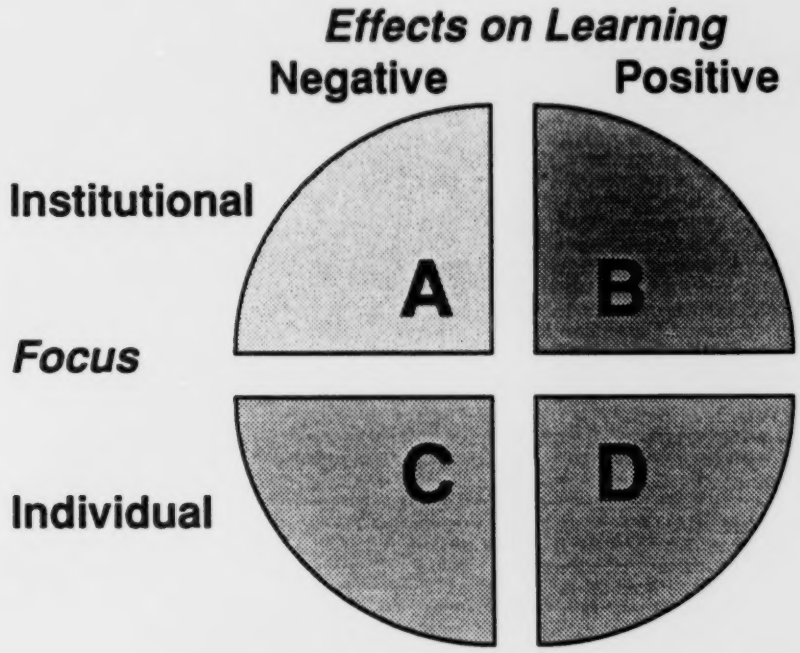

Figure 1 The purposes of formal theory in reflection

Quadrant A: Here formal theory is serving the interests of the institution in a way that inhibits learning. It is seen as part of higher education protectionism, where knowledge generation and distribution is perceived by the learner to have no connection with their practitioner theory, and indeed devalues it.

Quadrant B: This is formal theory as part of professional socialisation: it is still serving institutional needs, but it will induct the learner into shared understandings.

Quadrant C: Theory is used by the individual in a ritualistic way that is empty as far as real personal learning goes. They cannot use it to critique their own practice because they do not perceive that it has any relevance.

Quadrant D: Here the learner can use the frameworks of formal theory as a source of concepts and ideas that help them to test, evaluate and extend their own practical understandings. Ideas that have explanatory power for them become incorporated into their practitioner or informal theory, enriching and extending it.

Conclusion

Which of the various possibilities identified in Figure 1 are realised, depends on many factors that operate in the context of the counsellor-candidate dialogue. The interaction of individual values and understanding

with institutional practices will produce the mix that determines which quadrant is dominant.

The candidate's previous educational experiences will have shaped their expectations and perceptions of the openness of institutions; their previous study experiences will have created positive or negative perceptions of theoretical texts. The assessment or counselling procedures may be perceived as placing more weight on the protection of academic standards than on accepting a variety of accounts of experience. The counsellor's own understandings of the role and function of formal theory may give greater weight to some aspects rather than others.

It is worth noting that in more traditional assessment of learning a candidate from any quadrant could still gain credit, for example essays in which theory is serving any of these purposes can still pass. However because of the nature of our APEL only candidates in Quadrant D would be successful. This means that we are insisting on deep level meaningful learning, which necessarily makes the process demanding.

During informal monitoring, we asked APEL candidates for their opinion of its value. Those who had been able to exploit the positive potential in quadrant D (Figure 1) felt strongly that it had been valuable. One woman teacher who had run short courses now saw that her work was substantively equivalent to that of the formally titled 'Short Courses Manager' in her college. Fired with new confidence, she changed jobs.

A FE teacher who claimed APEL for developing NVQ material for publication felt he was '...much better prepared for future developments... I have moved away from an instinctive strategy'. More importantly for the rest of his degree studies, he felt he had learned how to use theoretical texts; 'This learning has proved to be an invaluable asset which I have since used successfully when formulating assignments for my course'.

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Accreditation: The strange death of liberal adult education

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'I do not appreciate the idea of being accredited, I have to now contribute written work. Why do we need to change this system?' (Long-standing student on a History of Art course).

Introduction

Few changes in the practice, context and identity of University Continuing Education (CE) appear to be as fundamental as accreditation. There can be few by now who are unaware of HEFCE Circular 3/94 or its Scottish and Welsh equivalents. The enormity of the changes, and the speed with which they must be expedited, seem to place CE on the edge of a precipice. During the 1993-4 session Leeds University has run a pilot programme of Accredited Continuing Education (ACE) which is drawing to a close at the time of writing. Experience from this pilot suggests that there is much from the tradition of non-accredited Liberal Adult Education (LAE) that can be preserved, even strengthened, in the new context. Many characteristics of CE are now being adopted by HE in general, for example, student-centred flexibility, wide accessibility and participation, equal opportunities, and a stress upon capability rather than qualification for study. Looked at dispassionately, however, the evolution of a mass HE system has not so far rendered it any less elitist. Accreditation presents CE with two crucial challenges, one external, the other internal. External to CE departments, the mainstreaming of LAE may contribute to the widening of social participation in HE. Yet - and this is the internal challenge - it is clear from many of the fears that have been articulated about Circular 3/94, that many LAE students are drawn from a social and educational background that has little need of HE. Many of its students are retired; large numbers are already graduates; and many attend classes primarily for recreational reasons.

A Pilot Programme of Accredited LAE

In the Autumn of 1993 the University of Leeds advertised thirteen classes accredited at Level One within its LAE programme. All thirteen were viable, recruiting 154 adult education (AE) students. In addition 70 undergraduates (47 f/t; 23 p/t) took an ACE course as an elective option in their degree programme. All the full-timers were under twenty. The age profile of the part-time undergraduates (25-65+), however, more nearly matched that of the AE students, and in a number of ways their recruitment contributed to meeting the 'mission' of the Department. However, the primary objective of the pilot scheme was to assist in the accreditation process for Leeds' large (490 fte students) LAE programme. Whilst reference is made to the undergraduate constituencies, this study is confined to information extracted from mid-session evaluation questionnaires issued to all the AE students and returned by 95 (62%) of them. An additional ACE course (Introduction to Black Women's Studies, recruiting 25 AE students) has been excluded from this study since it only started in April 1994.

The 95 questionnaires offer a useful indicator of the kinds of students attracted to ACE. Several caveats are however needed. This was not a scientific exercise. The function of the pilot courses was to introduce accredited classes to the Leeds LAE programme, soften the impact of large-scale accreditation in subsequent years, and provide a learning experience for the staff involved. Students paid no more for their class than they would for a non-accredited one, and they were not obliged to fulfil the formal assessment requirements for their course. Many joined with no intention of doing so, an unlikely luxury in the future, and one which skews the data. Furthermore the evaluation questionnaire was not intended as a rigorous research exercise, but rather to elicit mid-term feedback from students on the progress of their courses, and indications of their views on some likely future developments. (Respondents were not even asked to indicate their gender). Other caveats are that the number of students in the lower age ranges is small and hardly yields statistical-significance, and that there is no comparable body of data derived from students attending non-accredited classes. This clearly restricts generalisation.

A final caveat concerns the assessment method built into these courses. It is atypical of the developing practice at Leeds (and doubtless elsewhere). All courses were accredited by the University's Taught Courses Committee for Arts, Social Studies and Law and (with the exception of

one 10 credit course) were 20 credit units in which 50% of the assessment was based on coursework, and the other 50% on a 'seen' two-hour examination paper. Furthermore, at the time the pilot programme was advertised the examination component was to have been a traditional 'unseen' paper. The latter stipulation was amended following negotiations with the validating committee during the session. Since then further ACE courses have been validated for 1994-5 and subsequent sessions, very few of which involve an examination. This rapid change in policy reflects the educational process that has gone on inside the institution directly as a result of accreditation: from a position of apprehension - in which ACE seemed likely to lead to lower academic standards and therefore needed to be policed through traditional, rigorous assessment practices - to one in which considerable interest is being taken in, and encouragement given to, forms of assessment more obviously articulated to meet the needs and capacities of adult students. This rapid evolution means that both the pilot programme and its students' views are atypical of planned future developments, and this detracts from the general applicability of the survey's findings. Had the Department been able to secure more 'student-friendly' assessment methods, the survey would arguably have shown a more positive response to accreditation.

Of the 95 students returning questionnaires 59 (62%) had previously attended courses run by the department. Table One gives their age breakdown.

	Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Returners	59	0	2	5	7	23	22
New	36	1	4	8	5	12	6
Total	95	1	6	13	12	35	28

Table One: Returning and new students by age

As already pointed out, there is no 'control group' of students following non-accredited LAE against which to compare the above information. But it seems not to differ greatly from an impressionistic judgement of the age-profile of students joining courses in 'traditional' arts-based LAE programmes. If the age range is divided at 55, then there is a higher proportion of younger students entering AE for the first time, than of the same age-group in the returners' cohort (33% against 24%). Of these younger students two-thirds said they were enrolling for reasons of personal development/recreation; 9% definitely intended to go on to HE, whilst 16% were using their ACE course to sample HE. Among the older students 91% attended for personal development/recreation; only 3% were contemplating HE, and 6% using ACE to test-out HE.

There was marked difference in educational background between those who had taken a LAE course before, and those who had not. Despite a large number of retired people who had left school at the minimum age (14 out of 23 aged 65 and above), returning students had greater experience of HE: only 45% were not graduates, compared to 75% of new students. (This comparison would be all the sharper if the part-time undergraduates attending ACE courses had been taken into account). There was a similar disparity in employment patterns, as Table Two reveals:

	New Students	Returners
In paid full-time work	23%	8%
Mainly responsible for home/family	8%	8%
Retired	33%	66%
In paid part-time work	17%	8%
Voluntary work	3%	2%
Unemployed	14%	6%
Invalidity benefit	-	2%

Table Two: How students described themselves by economic category

Small though the sample is, the findings point clearly towards a likely reduction of interest in LAE, once it is accredited, among the retired; and to enhanced constituencies of interest among the unemployed and both full and part-time workers. (Inclusion of responses from those enrolled on the *Introduction to Black Women's Studies* ACE

course would almost certainly reinforce this conclusion).

19% to 24% in the number of older students prepared to fulfil all the assessment requirements, but an almost identical proportion deciding over

Did the experience of ACE change students' perceptions of accredited LAE? Table Three suggests a small but encouraging increase from the same period that they were uninterested in assessment of any kind

	Under 55s	Over 55s
Working for credit	29 (35)	11 (16)
Completing assessment but not wanting credit	15 (9)	8 (8)
Completing coursework but not examination	9 (9)	25 (26)
May do some coursework	18 (16)	27 (16)
Uninterested in coursework of any kind	29 (31)	29 (34)

Table Three: Students' summaries in percentages of their intentions at the start of the course (and in brackets mid-way through)

Among respondents over-55, seven declared that they would never again attend an ACE course (yet none responded that their course had failed to meet their expectations). None of the under-55s rejected ACE in this way, though 13% (along with 10% of the over-55s) stated that they would attend an ACE course in future only if there was no non-accredited provision which suited them. As Table Three also shows, however, 9% of all respondents never intended to do any coursework, and there was a slight increase in this group as the course progressed. Whatever benefits such students gain from their attendance (and they are considerable, and usually involve significant out-of-class work), it is hard to defend the allocation of resources to them; and it will be as hard to convert them to the idea of accredited courses in which assessment is compulsory.

Any encouragement that one might draw from there being only seven students (all of them retired) repulsed by the idea of taking any further accredited classes, must be tempered by three considerations; firstly the significant proportion just noted who were uninterested in any assessment. Secondly there is the question of the 59 students (38% of the whole) who had not returned evaluation forms: they might arguably be counted as negatives, although attendance figures towards the end of the programme suggest that drop-out is around only 13%. Thirdly, alongside this pilot accredited programme there was advertised a non-accredited one of more than 200 one-or two-term courses, upon which nearly 3000 students enrolled. Conclusions from the pilot project cannot, then, be taken as indicative of the AE student body as a whole. Those 3000 students enrolled on their chosen courses for many reasons; in most off-campus locations there was no ACE option available to them, whilst on-campus the timing and availability of subjects in the ACE pilot programme was inevitably restricted. Nonetheless, an unknown but presumably significant number consciously rejected the accredited options that were available to them. An equally unknown, but doubtless sizeable, number are likely to have been influenced by the fact that 12 of the 13 courses advertised in the pilot programme were to be examined in a manner redolent of compulsory school-age education. Response from the pilot courses is illuminating on this issue. Only 25 respondents felt entirely at ease with the idea of sitting an exam in the first place. And only 32 stated that they were comfortable with the idea of a 'seen' examination. 'Open book' examinations, seen by many tutors as a fairer way to assess students' performance, met the approval of only 7 respondents. Underlining the sensitive nature of assessment issues, almost a third of respondents ignored this section of the questionnaire completely. Of the 64 who did not, 55% thought assessment should be on the basis of coursework only; 66% favoured assessment, against only 21% approving group projects; 48% were in favour of seminar presentations as part of assessment. The

Writing an article for a serious newspaper	25
Writing a book review	20
Compiling a portfolio, to which you add notes and comments	42
Writing up a report on a project you have undertaken	98
Writing and compiling a pamphlet or brief publications	23

Table Four: Percentage of respondents endorsing each category in response to the question: 'Instead of traditional essays, written work can take other forms. Please indicate those that would interest you.'

kinds of written work preferred by students who are receptive to accreditation are detailed in Table Four.

The definition of a portfolio, as some respondents complained, was too vague. However, taken with the almost unanimous interest in project-work, it is clear that portfolios, personal project reports - and by inference learning journals - would be popular and viable forms of assessment for adult students on accredited courses. (Students were not asked to express an opinion about learning journals, mainly because of the conceptual and definitional problem involved in the limited space available).

Conclusion: a strange death for LAE?

In his seminal study of the Edwardian era, George Dangerfield argued that *The Strange Death of Liberal England* occurred in circumstances approaching revolution. Its death was strange because it happened at the very height of liberalism's powers (measured in terms both of intellectual competence and electoral support).

LAE seemingly stands on the brink of revolution, one which many practitioners fear will see a rapid diminution in popular support. Accreditation, however, is an opportunity to move closer towards fulfilling LAE's long-standing aim of widening access. Indeed this is not just an opportunity but an urgent imperative for pragmatic, financial reasons. Put bluntly, there is likely to be significant 'wastage' of traditional LAE students with accreditation. A reinvigorated sense of social purpose, and of the relevance of accreditation to widening participation in HE, could provide a crucial underpinning to the development of new markets. Statistically uneven though the data is, the Leeds pilot ACE programme suggests both that there is a market for accredited courses among constituencies hitherto under-represented in LAE, and a willingness among students old and new to undertake 'non-traditional' forms of assessment appropriate to adult learners.

'The course has more than fulfilled my objectives enrolling on it - if examination/assessment/compilation of portfolio can expand my 'personal development', I would be delighted to comply with whatever the University proposes.'
(New student on History of Art course).

Scientific ideals, changing culture and continuing education

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Adult/continuing education in Britain has traditionally been underpinned by a number of ideological and altruistic commitments. One of the most important and distinctive of these, with a history stretching back at least to the eighteenth century, has been the commitment to the public understanding of science and to fostering public sympathy for scientific ideals. This takes somewhat different forms between 'pure' science, seen as high culture of intrinsic value, and the applications of science which affect ordinary people's lives more directly and often adversely. Also, it takes on a characteristic slant in relation to environmental science. However, the established assumptions and academic structures underlying science-centred adult education have become profoundly questionable over recent years. This has been a result of seismic shifts in general popular culture and in the educational system as a whole and, at an academic level, radical reconstructions of disciplines such as the history and philosophy of science and the fashioning of new disciplines such as bioethics and the sociology of science. This paper is a reflection on developments in science-centred adult education, present and future, arising from the changes in scientific ideals, in the cultural and educational background, and in political and governmental attitudes towards science.

Adult education throughout its history has had a variety of forms and motivations. Straightforward utilitarian and economic motives have obviously been important, supplying individuals' direct vocational needs or the requirements of organisations for particular skills among the workforce. In addition, continuing education has been driven by various ideological, cultural and altruistic ideals.

Some of those ideals have been overtly political, as in the left-wing movement for working-class education associated in Britain with the early WEA and the Trades Unions. Others have been religious, and the evangelical work of the Churches themselves provides obvious examples.

Historically there have been some interesting examples of adult education in which religious ideals have been combined sympathetically with science. The Natural Theology movement was of this sort, from the Boyle Lectures of the late 17th century to the Bridgewater Treatises of the 19th. By contrast there has also been an important strand of anti-religious quasi-scientific adult education that we may associate, for example, with the Social Darwinism of Ernst Haeckel, the popular writings of Bertrand Russell, and present-day proponents of 'scientism' such as Peter Atkins and Richard Dawkins. This tendency has been associated variously with the political left wing (with Marx, obviously) and the right wing (the Eugenics movement and National Socialism).

Meanwhile, there has been a tradition of adult education in science where political and religious axe-grinding, on the surface at least, is put scrupulously to one side. In Britain, this should perhaps be traced back to the 17th century, to Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* and its realisation in the theoretically non-sectarian Royal Society. In the 19th century the British Association, at least to begin with, promoted scientific ideas in their own right and for the well-being of all. Elsewhere in Europe, a paradigm example of the tradition is Alexander von Humboldt, who in 1845 published *Kosmos*, an encyclopaedic and highly popular presentation of the grandeur of science and its centrality in human culture.

It is useful to distinguish between three different aspects of what we might call the Scientific Ideal: the technological, the environmental, and the cultural. The technological ideal is to do with the advancement of industry and material progress. It was prominent in the ideas of Francis Bacon already mentioned above. While it is possible to regard technological progress as benefiting humanity as a whole, we live in a world of fierce industrial competition between nations, and so the promotion of science in this sense receives much of its impulse from economic nationalism. The British Association for the Advancement of Science became, as it were, the association for the advancement of British science. Today, as much as ever if not more so, national economic competitiveness is an important driving force behind the promotion of the public understanding of science, particularly, and as one might expect, by national governments. This is nicely illustrated by the fact that the British government has just instituted a *National Week of Science, Engineering and Technology* whereas the European Commission has instituted a *European Week of Scientific Culture*.

Economic considerations obviously have their place, and were mentioned in the first paragraph of this paper, but in the context of adult education it

has been conventional to make a clear distinction between economically-driven courses (continuing vocational education, CVE), and those driven by higher ideals ('liberal' education). One of those higher ideals is a concern for the natural environment. The Green tendency has deep historical roots as in the movements for Natural Theology and Darwinistic nature-philosophy. For at least the last twenty years environmental studies have accounted for a substantial and popular section of university adult education. Simultaneously, the environmental sciences together with associated social sciences have mushroomed in popularity among younger full-time students. However, the process has had certain worrying aspects that should lead us to question the position of environmental studies in liberal adult education. For one thing, there is now a large industry based on environmental engineering, monitoring, protection, legislation, and lobbying. Nothing wrong with that: but perhaps the global professionalisation of the field has left *liberal* environmental education with little more to say. Of course there remain issues of concern to individuals and to groups outside the circle of environmental professionals, but the issues have tended to become marginal and the people disempowered.

At the same time, while seeing the explosion in environmental professionalism, paradoxically it is possible to challenge the efficacy and value of the environmental public education that has taken place since the 1960's. Air and water pollution and rural and urban environments have apparently deteriorated. There has only been marginal success in developing renewable energy sources. Nuclear energy is in a timewarp. Green ideals in the end have had relatively little political or practical effect. Most worrying to the adult educator, there is a stubborn streak of irrationalism in the Green movement, and it has close links with the antiscience movement. For example, Friends of the Earth has expressed opposition to technology *in principle* and has displayed a profoundly ambivalent attitude to science. Any student of William Blake will say there's nothing new about that, but it raises questions as to whether environmental populism has a hidden agenda antithetical to the genuine public understanding of science.

The third aspect of the Scientific Ideal is the view of science as the greatest triumph of human culture. Pure science is seen to be of self-evident intrinsic worth, and technological consequences do not add to, or detract from, the value of science as science. Key features of science are its rationalism, objectivity, integrity, and genuine holism. Although modern science was originally a product of the West, it is quintessentially trans-ethnic and international. Here are to be found many of the ideological foundations of scientific liberal adult education: if science is our supreme cultural achievement, is as close as one can get to absolute truth, and somehow represents humanity's destiny, then to be allowed to understand science is everybody's human right.

Of course, science is difficult, and the furthest reaches of cosmic science involve the most advanced mathematics. Few non-scientists can take their science 'neat'. Adult education in science, therefore, has been as much a matter of interpretation as of communication, and attempts have been made where possible to convey the meaning, philosophy and history of science, and the sheer excitement of it all, without demanding that students master the science itself. It is possible to teach someone about the culture of Renaissance art without attempting to teach the skill of painting the ceiling of a chapel, so can't something similar be done with science?

But scientific culture and scientific ideals are changing fast, and the popular image of science is very different from what is was a generation ago. There are several dimensions to the changes, some of which have already been mentioned above. The following may be listed:

1. There is steadily lessening support for the idea that science has intrinsic intellectual and cultural worth. It is now very common to regard science as simply a handmaiden of technology, justified only in economic terms.
2. At the same time the philosophy of science has undergone a meltdown. The optimistic evolutionism of Karl Popper is generally discredited among academic philosophers. The 'anything goes' philosophy of Paul Feyerabend illustrates a more fluid intellectual climate in which it is not possible to agree even on a definition of science. The deconstruction of science has gone hand-in-hand with sceptical and deconstructive movements in intellectual life generally.
3. The demotion of science involves the promotion of other forms of truth. Increasingly, science is being made answerable to external authorities. Obviously it is no bad thing that science should be answerable to the wider community in matters of, say, bioethics; and that scientists should be subject to the law; but the trend is going further than that and we can see science as being subjected to a new theocracy. The trend

can be rationally defended: given that science is a social construction, why should scientific 'truth' stand higher than that of any other social institution?

4. There is a reaction, particularly visible in current postmodernist trends in the history of science, leading people to redefine the history of science in non-Eurocentric ways. The danger is that the new 'ethnosciences' can undermine the principles of integrity and universalism: science as shared human culture is replaced by science as narrow ethnic tradition. Again, the trend can be rationally defended: given that science is a social construction, why should social construction in the modern West be preferred to social construction in, say, pre-Columbian Central America? And, following a related argument, why should we continue to accept a non-feminist Western science?

5. Throughout the West there is a resurgence of irrationalism which takes many forms. There is the antiscientific strand of the Green movement already mentioned above; the irrational forms of complementary medicine; belief in astrology and the occult; and the wilder shores of popular psychology. This is not unrelated to the rise of political and religious fundamentalism and to the 'crisis of liberalism'.

6. Particularly in Britain, science has sagged badly in the secondary education system. In Further Education and in Higher Education, a massive expansion in student numbers has passed by mathematics and 'pure' science. Such has been the expansion in the Social Sciences, and to some extent in the applied sciences, that the profile of science itself has diminished considerably as a fraction of the scholarly world.

7. Meanwhile, university adult education is under severe stress for a variety of reasons which need not be set out here. There is a real danger that departments of some adult/continuing education will not, in the future, be able to sustain multidisciplinary staffs including scientists. If scientific adult education devolves to being no more than a spare-time activity of staff whose normal work is focused elsewhere, or if its centre of gravity shifts to other institutions - perhaps to the Open University or to the electronic media - then its character will change profoundly.

This list is not presented as a list of modern heresies to be resisted at all costs: on the contrary there are justifiable, or at least understandable, elements in all the above tendencies. The very strength of the argument for, say, non-Eurocentric science is what makes it so easy to naively replace one ethnocentrism by another and to throw out the baby of science with the bathwater of modern Western culture. Actually the above list can be looked at very positively, as evidence that the need for scientific adult education is as great as ever and that there are exciting new challenges in the justification and interpretation of science.

Unfortunately, the practice of adult education depends on its context and on the background culture. In British universities, scientific adult education depends on institutional support and government acceptance of scientific ideals. As those ideals are undermined, or diverted, or radically altered, as they surely are being, so scientific adult education will have to create a new future for itself.

People's academics for people's universities? Adult educators in the mass higher education system

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This paper invites academic and academic-related professional staff in university continuing education to contemplate the following paradox. Continuing education within the new British postbinary mass higher education system brings the university adult continuing educator in from the cold, at just the time when a chill antiprofessional political wind is blowing still colder through the enlarged system.

Adult educators in the 'old university' tradition, who were at times themselves stridently antiprofessional and took pride in a superior distinctiveness from 'internal' colleagues, are being normalised into the rest of the academic profession as it becomes deprofessionalised, or as some would have it, proletarianised.

There is poignancy in this: those who would have served the proletariat from the extramural community join an enlarged and unified, though not necessarily homogenised, university system which is itself now charged with serving, if not 'the proletariat' for that term has become problematic in the socio-economic and employment scenario of the nineties, then at least a much larger part of the school-leaving and older population.

Moreover, there is every prospect that the unification of the higher education system will be followed by post-secondary unification as Further and Higher Funding Councils coalesce into what might be called Tertiary Education Councils. It will be important for the enlarged system and for society what form internal differentiation takes. And it will be an interesting test of our own 'academic community', in this event, with what enthusiasm we welcome this further democratisation - and proletarianisation.

The remainder of the paper

1 discusses briefly the crisis facing the academic profession generally
2 discusses the impact upon continuing educators (of various persuasions) within universities (of various complexions)
3 speculates about the future for universities and academics from this perspective, and for university continuing education and its practitioners
4 remarks briefly on the directions of causation implied in the Conference theme as seen from the perspective of this paper.

Farewell to donnish dominion

Halsey (1992), doyen for many years of the liberal left, examined the predicament of the British academic profession (which he couched in the plural), beginning by reference to the senior common room, which itself sounds quaint and donnish to many a contemporary academic ear outside the ancient universities. Like Altbach (1989), and by comparison also with the earlier Halsey and Trow study (1971), he notes the sense of crisis in British higher education, which he credits to the structure of the system itself and to the idea of a university in this country, rather than merely to government hostility: 'Britain is the most extreme case of expansion of universities in terms of what a university is and should be'; 'mass higher education still strikes the British academic ear as a self-contradictory absurdity' (Halsey 1992 pp.11,13). According to Altbach, taking a comparative perspective from an American viewpoint, 'the British academic profession has suffered the most severe set of crises and reverses of any in the industrialized world' (1989 14-15).

The sense of crisis, loss of certainty and loss of status is echoed in much contemporary comment in the educational press, and can be discerned in many quarters of diverse political persuasion and professional interest. Robertson (1994) finds a radical-romantic (alias innovative-conservative) distinction more useful than left-right. Elton (1994), who refers to 'the deficiencies of traditional collegiality', thereby distancing himself from the traditionalists, promulgates the need for new forms of staff training and development to meet new circumstances: declining resources, increased numbers, preoccupations with quality and with external interventions to assure it, and the new managerialism under which academics labour in many universities.

The former editor of *Marxism Today* suggests that 'the universities have been beached; they are institutions in search of a role'; and that 'academics have become marooned, isolated from the most dynamic areas of society' such as those engaged with environmentalism, feminism,

sexuality and human rights (Jacques 1994). In academics' main trade journal, Angela Crum Ewing (1994) asks 'what has happened to the ideal of the community of scholar'. She identifies post-Jarratt managerialism, the concept of market forces and competition, along with 'relentless reduction in government funding coupled with demand for rapid growth in student numbers, and continual pressure to improve research ratings and attract external fundings', and devolved budgeting within universities, as threatening an AUT ideal of a community of scholars which was not a reality even pre-Jarratt. Central to the purposes of the new AUT Secretary is professionalisation via charter status for the union - which in turn looks depressingly distant, and distancing, from a further education perspective (see for instance Keith Scribbins in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, April 29 1994, on chartered status).

Space precludes serious discussion of the causes of this crisis, but it is important to the purposes of this paper that the dual character of the crisis is noted: a crisis of the university in terms of vision and mission (or, simply, idea); and a crisis for its core workers, the academic staff who feel their working autonomy threatened, not by the blue pencil of the censor but by changing work conditions exacerbated by diminished social standing and financial reward. One need not be overly conspiratorial in deducing causes. Political barbarism apart, the sheer growth in numbers of what Elton calls the last remaining cottage industry must count. Halsey notes an expansion from 19,000 British academics in 1964 to 46,000 in universities in 1989, as well as 17,000 in polytechnics, ignoring the increasing numbers of part-time or casualised university teachers. In an era of down-sizing and out-sourcing, an occupational group which relies on public funds when public sector borrowing is excessive and the economy uncertain, and which has done little to increase productivity in the way that producers of artefacts have generally achieved, cannot expect to hold the same privileged status that was enjoyed by a handful of dons of post-war years. Scarcity value has gone. Value for money has displaced deference.

Changing continuing educators

How does this look from the viewpoint of the university continuing educator? What kind of university does she or he see, value and want; feel committed to and able to engage with? What of the character and soul, too, of SCUTREA and of UACE, each of which carries the word 'university' in its title?

We can no longer talk compellingly of the extramural adult educator. When I moved from a polytechnic to teach extramurally at Leeds in the sixties it was clear, at least with hindsight, what I was doing. I was leaving the lower status and poorer resourced sector of higher education, where I taught mainly 'the disadvantaged': second chance adults taking a degree at night, black and other overseas students on the London external, school drop-outs having another go as young adults in a non-paternalistic environment. I left a people's university to which Crosland had denied the much-craved title of university, where every student was an adult and many were working concurrently, to join an elite university (worth the one third drop in salary to escape up and out); but to join what proved to be a proudly different culture, as it seemed, and not merely a sub-culture in the extramural subsystem of the main university. The adults I now taught were of, but not really at, a real university; the paper awards they earned after three years' dedicated intellectual labour were a ticket to nowhere, not worth entry even to the first year of a Leeds undergraduate degree (see Duke and Marriott 1973).

Goodbye to all that. The continuing educator in the (as yet only so-called) mass higher education system is, especially following Circular 3/94 (HEFCE 1994), a regular academic - or as it may be, rather, a regular administrative or academic-related, 'mainstreamed' member of the university. They - we - are all in universities, give or take a Bolton or two. Some who work with colleges of further education, where higher education also takes place, feel uneasy about the new binary divide. A few are pushing to integrate FE and HE funding and accreditation methodologies, and looking to the day when, with Scotland and Wales as possible pointers, FE and HE will merge administratively and conceptually into an undivided open-lattice accessible system (Robertson 1994).

At one level there are grounds for celebration. Instead of teaching citizens 'off-shore' for nothing beyond intrinsic gain, we see a greatly enlarged university system. Notwithstanding the present freeze on expansion administered through the latest administrative creation, the MASN, the system is opening up increasingly to all with the interest and apparent ability to study at this level, with adults in the majority. The difficulty is that the move towards a learning society is not obviously accompanied by transformation of universities into learning organisations. Academics' conditions of service, dominated by quality exercises for teaching as well as for research, and the constraints of growth and the

market place, are less appealing, even in sectors which are not embattled over new contracts and conditions of service.

The future of the 'university CE community'

It is a long step from the workload of four three-year extramural classes of the Leeds lecturer of the sixties to the wheeling and dealing of the modern CE catalyst in 'new' and increasingly too in the 'old' universities. Here life is a constant round of lobby and manoeuvre over modularisation and credit rating, access partnerships and WBL equivalencies, as well as timetables, contracts, teaching schedules, and the tension engendered by research selectivity. Teaching is a luxurious relief and research an unattainable ideal for many in the new-style change units (often not called CE, much less Adult Education) which many of our peculiar 'academic community' now occupy.

Can we stomach the often dramatic change of professional identity which this implies for ourselves and our successors? Does the victory of mass over elite higher education compensate for the loss of distinctiveness and the freedom of lifestyle of the old extramural tutor?

As Elton and Crum Ewing point out apropos the old days in academe generally, it was not all rosy in the former extramural garden. UCAE, transmuted through UCACE into postbinary UACE, was fairly castigated as an old boys' club, just as the academic profession in western industrialised societies remains heavily white and male in character. The 1994 UACE Conference by centring attention on women showed how powerful a female CE community there is in the universities. One challenge for the university CE profession is to sustain its distinctive values, and to infiltrate and perpetuate these into the heartlands of the different universities across the spectrum with which it is now inextricably interwoven. Of course, if you prefer privilege and patriarchy, it is easy not to get enthusiastic about what all in all will prove to be the democratisation of British higher education.

The future for CE professionals is therefore increasingly entangled with the future of academics in general. We share a common destiny: a massively expanded, essentially unreformed (i.e. 'inefficient'), labour force whose aspirations or pretensions ill match the suspicion in which it is held by government and the dominant and popular media. We are much divided, as an academic community or profession, by forces external to the university, which have been internalised by different groups or value-sets within. We face the prospect, on the one hand of the FE-HE divide being eroded or erased, on the other hand of a hierarchy of universities firming up into a quasi-caste system, based on research reputation but underpinned by increasing resource differentiation.

People's universities for the mass, and a new elite division for the wealthy, lucky and clever? The character, quality and social functions of British higher education may depend in some measure on the extent to which higher continuing educators (a) clarify and reinforce their own inherited and evolving value system or professional ethic (b) succeed in permeating their university colleagues with these values and purposes (c) are able to tap and inject into the universities some of the values and energies represented by the important social movements into which future-oriented idealism has apparently drained, from its location at least in part within the universities of the sixties.

On causation

To conclude with the briefest of words on the direction of causality. Conference title notwithstanding - ***'Practices, Contexts and Identities'***- the dominant direction of causation, in an admittedly interactive and spiralling process, is ***Contexts ➨ Practices ➨ Identities***. The identity of the archetypal British adult educator may perhaps have 'spontaneously generated' out of his [sic] valuing of equity, opportunity and socio-political reform (***values ➨ mission ➨ identity***?). However, the dominant form of higher adult education in which UCACE and later SCUTREA were born and formed their initial identities was one of marginality within the micro-context of the elite university, and the broader environment of a selective and class-structured social system. Professional identity made a virtue of difference (radical) from the dominant academic profession (conservative), and even rejected the very idea of the professional. For better for worse, we are all mainstream professionals and (quasi?-)academics now, and we had better be reflective as well as active about it.

This paper has explored some implications of these trends for the identity of the continuing educator in higher education, as the changing context demands new rationales and new rationalisations. New contexts demand new practices, and from these, buttressed no doubt by elegant rationalisations, grow new identities. How far will we, and the larger army of people's academics with whom we share the modern (but not postmodernist?) university, create and adhere to a new yet old ethic? When will we formulate and take our Socratic oath?

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'Tribes' and 'tribulations': narratives and the multiple identities of adult educators

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In this paper we explore the interaction between the impact of contestation and change in the world of adult education/adult learning, its narratives or story-telling practices, and the process by which the identities of adult educators are formed. We will examine the significance of this interaction by drawing on two inter-related themes - one being the so-called 'turn to textuality' and the other, the contemporary debates over (post)modern identities (Bauman 1991, Harvey 1991, Giddens 1991). In this way, we hope to demonstrate the significance of new theoretical perspectives in providing insights into the contemporary condition of adult educators.

The 'turn to textuality' is the position that the social world is made present, 'storied' or narrated into being through discursive practices which make our experience of the world meaningful. These practices can be seen as texts which can be 'read', i.e. interpreted or made sense of. Thus the notion of textuality foregrounds the place and function of narrative or story-telling as a 'world-making' practice. Adult education and adult learning can thus be seen as texts, discursive practices where a 'world' is defined, delimited or constituted in the process of story-telling.

Narratives order and compose life-course experiences. It is possible therefore to see practitioners as story-telling and story-receiving beings - as narrators of and narrated by the stories that define adult education 'worlds'. Practitioners 'live' stories, relate to others and construct themselves as meaningful, knowable subjects doing meaningful, knowable things through them. Most significantly, the identity of practitioners is forged through narratives - dominantly through their location in a single narrative which provides a stable, centred identity.

The 'storying' or discursive construction of worlds is not a directly observable phenomenon because every narrative conceals its own being as a narrative. It constructs or 'presents' a world but also 'represents' it and in so doing effectively conceals the 'world-making' taking place. Consequently, the place and function of narratives can only be understood indirectly. We will proceed therefore by considering typologies rather than narratives - in particular, the way in which a typology is used as a classificatory device describing sets of mutually exclusive or bounded practice. Typologies are a common feature of all educational discourse and adult education is no exception. One well-known typology (Darkenwald and Merriam 1982) classifies adult educators by using the metaphor of 'tribes'. This typology presents five 'tribes' of adult education - traditionalists, self actualisers, progressives, guerrillas, organisational maintainers - each with its own distinct aims, concerns and pedagogic style.

On the face of it, this typology appears to be simply a classificatory device for systematically describing a pre-existing world of adult education. However, it is also possible to 'read' the typology as unintentionally foregrounding the various narratives which constitute the world of adult education. In other words, it can be seen as itself telling a story, in terms of 'tribes', about adult education. However, this story can also be read in a different way, in terms of the various and different stories told by and through adult educators - stories which define worlds, influence practice and shape identity.

What this 'tribal' story is telling us, then, is that the identity of adult educators is forged through the identification with a 'tribe' or, to put it another way, through their location in a particular narrative. Unlike the tribes of ethnographic studies with their ascribed and tightly controlled membership, these 'tribes' 'exist solely by individual decisions to support the symbolic traits of tribal allegiance' (Bauman 1991:249). It is self-identification therefore which establishes the 'tribe'. Stories have to be 'lived', so through membership of a 'tribe', one accepts and tells a story with which one feels comfortable, which one feels is a 'good' story. Thus the adult educator identifies with a particular story and equally is identified by it. 'Tribal' allegiance, although chosen, is no casual or easily changed commitment. To become a 'member' of a particular 'tribe' is to be provided with clear and secure definitions, bounded ways of practising (a way of doing) and a clear and unambiguous identity (a way of being).

However, in the contemporary field of adult learning there is much to suggest that the boundaries between 'tribes' have broken down as the structure, organisation and values of adult education change and the very meaning of adult education, the 'lived reality' of the stories adult educators tell about themselves and what they are doing, becomes unsettled, ambiguous and unclear. When adults increasingly participate in sectors of education and training more traditionally associated with young people and when adult education is increasingly concerned with provision aimed at enhancing labour market opportunity, what then is distinctive about adult education? When a wide range of practitioners both inside and outside the traditionally defined field of education and training

are engaged in working with adults, who then are adult educators? What narratives and metaphors 'make sense' of this confusion and complexity? Or is the sense that is made, the 'reality' that is lived, simply that of confusion and complexity?

Adult education has always been characterised by more than one story (in terms of the typology, at least five). Historically some stories have declined in their impact (a story has to be told and re-told to maintain its significatory and 'creative' power) and some have been replaced by others - for example, stories about economic decline, competences, efficiency and the market as 'hero' (Ball 1990). At the same time, each of these modern stories has been influentially shaped by the underpinning meta-narratives or 'grand stories' (Lyotard 1984) of the Enlightenment project which 'subordinate, organise and account for other narratives' (Connor 1989: 30). These grand stories, for example of the progress of humanity towards emancipation through the application of scientific rationality, are no longer so influential. What is significant in the contemporary period is their loss of power, thus rendering self-identification with a particular 'tribe', the narration of one story, more tenuous. If adult educators can no longer have such a strong faith in the emancipatory consequences of their practices in a market-led provision of opportunities how can allegiance to a particular 'tribe', to one story, remain 'sensible'?

In this situation, we would argue that the possibilities for self-identification with and through a 'tribe' are undermined as the conditions upon which the latter develop now require of practitioners a capacity to shift across boundaries to better enable them to deal with the complexities of change. For 'adult educators'- and perhaps for all education and training practitioners- who they are, what they stand for, and what they do - becomes complex and ambiguous. The closure entailed by self-identification with a 'tribe' becomes open to uncertainty and ambivalence (Bauman 1991).

For some, all this is a disturbing pleasure, opening up the possibility of re-writing the field of adult learning to encompass and encourage a greater heterogeneity of practices and practitioners and a multiplicity of local or 'micro' narratives many of which provide a voice for the first time to subjugated knowledge and oppressed, marginalised groups. Here the loss of 'tribal' allegiances can be seen as producing new possibilities, where the loss of a fixed self-identification and an opening-up to the ambivalence of multiple, perhaps disjunctive, identities can be stimulating, if uncertain. For many, however, this breaking down of tribal boundaries is a painful experience, a form of 'tribulation', which can result in personal breakdown and the need for counselling and/or the ever more strident but 'doomed' assertion of tribal affiliation, the clinging to a single, confirmatory and 'liveable' narrative - Bauman, for example, has suggested that one aspect of the contemporary scene is a 'neo-tribalism' characterised by a search for community and a single fixed identity which is however doomed to failure. Yet for all, the grounding and fixing of identity in and through membership of a 'tribe', through location in one story, is undermined and replaced by multiple and shifting identities in which what it means to be an 'adult educator' is constantly re-configured. We now 'live' and contribute to many stories. Our identity may embrace many aspects of the metaphorical 'tribes' and include many new stories.

It is at this point that our second theme can be introduced for we would argue that practitioners and the ways in which their identities are 'storied' into being can be seen as interacting with processes endemic in the wider social formation. While the significance of these changes is much debated (Featherstone 1991, Giddens 1991, Harvey 1991, Lash and Urry 1994), a certain commonality exists in the view that 'responsibility' for dealing with the complexity and speed of change is increasingly placed back on individuals, wherein identity becomes a constantly changing reflexive project, constructed and manifested through images, consumption choices and lifestyles. The 'tribulations' of adult educators are therefore part of a wider anxiety about the insecurity and instability of identity in what is argued to be a late modern (Giddens 1991) or post-modern (Harvey 1991) condition.[1]

Giddens (1991:32) argues that in the contemporary context of 'a post-traditional order...the self becomes a reflexive project'. In modernity there is a reflexive process at work, a reflexivity radicalised by the amount of information available, the media through which it is constituted and disseminated and the range of options over which certain choices can and indeed have to be made. Self-identity therefore becomes conditional upon a choice of lifestyles that is existentially troubling as the very uncertainty and reflexivity upon which modernity is grounded means that making choices becomes ambiguous and insecure. In the condition of late modernity the options available are many and puzzling, necessitating risk yet demanding trust in others and ourselves.

To a certain degree, Giddens' view of identity is shared by writers on postmodernity, but there are differences of emphasis and explanation. For postmodernists, the notion of 'lifestyle' and 'image' and the proliferation and circulation of the latter through the media are the means by which an identity, a self-image, is constructed. Life itself is said to have become subject to aestheticisation - a 'playfulness' where identity is formed and re-formed by constantly unfolding desires expressed in lifestyle choices. Postmodernity is therefore a condition where the increased volatility of image results in an increased volatility of identity - 'as the pace, extension and

complexity of modern societies accelerate, identity becomes more and more unstable, more and more fragile' (Kellner 1993: 143).

The particular emphasis on consumption, lifestyle and image associated with the electronic media and post-Fordist forms of production, distribution and consumption engender new forms and possibilities for identity which are specifically post-modern. The image gains greater cultural significance even as images are commodified and consumed - 'the effect is to make it seem as if we are living in a world of ephemeral, created images' (Harvey 1991: 289). Thus while post-modern identity shares the reflexivity of modern identity, the former 'tends more to be constructed from the images of leisure and consumption and tends to be more unstable and subject to change' (Kellner 1993: 153). Here, the uncertainties and anxieties of troubling identity give way to an excitement and a disturbing pleasure in the constant forming and re-forming of multiple identities. The relative merits of modern and post-modern conceptions of identity cannot be explored here. However, there is clearly a radical difference between the modern view of the reflexive yet transcendental self for whom the finding of a stable identity is a normative goal and the post-modern perspective of the self as subject to image and images in which there is a 'playful' construction of multiple identities. Postmodernity is a world where people have to make their way without fixed references and traditional anchoring points. It is a world of hyper-reality, of 'simulations' that have replaced reality (Baudrillard 1988), of rapid change and bewildering instability where a proliferation of micro-narratives and localised knowledges creates conditions where meaning 'floats'. But all this is seen as something to be celebrated rather than regretted, a form of opportunity rather than loss.

Thus it is through the acceptance of location in a multiplicity of narratives and hence of multiple identities rather than 'tribal' affiliation and location in an underpinning 'grand' story which marks the degree to which adult educators are best able to negotiate the openness and ambivalence of contemporary times.

Of course, there is a much greater complexity in the contemporary situation than can be portrayed here. For example, while 'tribes' as a condition for fixing identity may be breaking down, a wish for tribal affiliation, a need to tell the one 'grand' story, continues. As a form of denial, an attempt to maintain or re-create a single, simple and unambiguous narrative and a 'liveable' identity, it is itself a contemporary 'tribulation' experienced by adult educators. Yet it may be the only strategy available to deal with those other contemporary tribulations of individuated responsibility, reflexivity and the fragmentation of hyper-reality that characterise the post-modern moment.

The implications of this for adult educators remain uncertain. While the loss of bounded, 'tribal', identity may be personally troubling, we would want to suggest that in occupying the space of many narratives and multiple identities a greater range of practices and possibilities is correspondingly opened up. Greater diversity may then be achieved even if the significance of the achievement remains uncertain as the 'empowerment' consequent on opening up may also 'disempower' in relation to a more unified intervention by, for instance, the state. Professionalism and management competence may become the most powerful story, even as adult educators explore the possibilities and tribulations of multiple identities. There is no single secure reading in/of the contemporary moment.

In examining the issue of identity by means of the 'turn to textuality' and of reflexivity in the hyper-real, it is noteworthy that new metaphors are being constituted for new times. Metaphors of 'border crossers' (Giroux 1992) and 'in-between spaces' (Bhabha 1994) are being put forward which open up the spaces of troubling and troubled identity, where it is the very spaces themselves which have increased significance in the formation and re-formation of identity. How powerful such metaphors are or can be, and how by telling new stories we can move to new positions, remains to be seen.

Note

[1] Some of the ideas in this section of the paper are elaborated further in Edwards and Usher (1995).

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Developing an open learning framework for MPhil/PhD research training

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Introduction

The intention of this paper is to outline a research and development project which I am undertaking for the Faculty of Educational Studies at the University of Southampton and to discuss some of the issues that arise from it. I have focused on activities which we have carried out to date and on reflections on work in progress, rather than on any final conclusions/outcomes.

The primary aim of the study, which began in October 1993, is to develop a means by which we can offer a research training programme which meets the diverse needs of part-time MPhil/PhD research students. We also hope that the work of the project will provide ways to alleviate the marginal/isolated position often felt by adult students in the University.

Part-time MPhil/PhD students

Since the Winfield Report (ESRC 1987) which reported on possible reasons why research students failed to complete their PhDs, and the subsequent publication of the ESRC Guidelines for Postgraduate Research Training for the Social Sciences (ESRC undated), research training has been a compulsory requirement for students registered for an MPhil/PhD by research.

Our Faculty research training programme was introduced three years ago and is currently delivered through conventional means, i.e. through lectures and seminars during two weekly afternoon sessions. It became increasingly apparent, however, both from the experience of running the programme and from feedback from students, that the needs of part-time students were not being met by the programme for a number of reasons.

This situation was heightened by the fact that within the Faculty, part-time students outnumber full-timers by a large ratio (as at April 1994 by 79 to 12). This weighting towards part-time research students is, I would suggest, more likely to occur within subject areas which are practitioner-based and where professional practitioners choose to carry out research into, or closely related to, their own practice.

One of the initial activities that we undertook for the study was to survey all our registered part-time students in order to gain a clearer picture of different student profiles in relation to, for example, their requirements for research training, their employment situations and what resources they had access to. In total 76 (the number registered at the time of circulation of the survey) part-time MPhil/PhD students were sent the questionnaire and we received 65 responses (i.e. a response rate of 86%). I am currently analysing these, but an initial examination of the returns indicates that of the respondents 22% have attended the research training programme regularly, 32% occasionally and 46% have never attended. If we discount those students who began their studies before the programme was developed, the figures appear to be more like 26%, 35% and 39%. This still means that a majority of part-time students do not attend the programme regularly.

The most common reasons, cited time and time again, for non-attendance were the following: that the students lived too far away from the University to make the journey on a regular basis; that the timing of the programme was inconvenient; and that they simply did not have time to attend. Changing the timing of the sessions would possibly enable more students to attend but would not serve to help those students who cited the two other main reasons.

To complement the survey and to get a more immediate response from students, we invited all the part-time students to attend an evening workshop at the University which took place during the Christmas 1993 vacation. The aim was to involve students in the project from its inception, and to enable them to discuss some of the difficulties they had had, or were having with the programme as well as other possible concerns, for example access to resources within the University, and the learning support they received through the supervisory process or through other means available to them. In total, thirteen students, who were all at different points in their research, attended this workshop. One of its main outcomes was that students supported the notion that we would be developing some open learning research training materials as part of the project, but they also wanted more opportunities to interact and engage in dialogue with other students and other academic staff besides their supervisor. This dialogue was considered, to be a vital part of the PhD process, relieving isolation and helping them to feel part of a wider community of researchers.

Open learning framework

This led us to decide that the most appropriate approach would be to develop an open learning framework which offered both alternative forms of

research training delivery and a variety of means by which students could interact with each other and with academic staff.

It was our intention that the learning materials would be utilised in a variety of ways. For example students could use them on their own, in conjunction with their supervisor, or they could be used to complement seminars run at the University. In addition, we determined that we would run some research training sessions at times more appropriate for those part-time students who could get to the University, for example in the evenings, or at the weekends.

Support Strategies

We also considered the need to integrate the research training programme with the supervisory process in a more explicit way. At present, the link is a tenuous one, usually consisting of the circulation of the outline of the programme to the supervisors. As some part-time students' primary link with the University is through their supervisor, it followed that supervisors needed to be familiar with the learning materials and that these should to be useful to them at times when they were discussing the research process with their students. We also envisaged that closer ties between the programme and supervision would enable us to develop the means by which students could negotiate an individualised research training programme to ensure that (a) all students covered all the relevant areas at times most appropriate to meet their needs; and (b) students had access to other students and academic staff through the most convenient channels.

In order to gain a clearer picture of current practice amongst supervisors and to elicit their ideas on how we might proceed, I am currently carrying out a series of interviews with a sample group of supervisors. Following the production of the first draft of the materials, a workshop is to be held for all Faculty research supervisors and the writers of the material, to discuss and agree a set of guidance for the use of the materials by the different parties.

The use of technology to encourage distance interaction between part-time students, for example through e-mail or computer conferencing has its obvious appeal. However, there are presently few opportunities for pursuing computer conferencing, owing to our lack of resources. Another restraining factor is that only 22% of students who responded to the questionnaire have ever used computer network facilities.

Approaches to the development of learning materials

Within the Faculty seven members of staff, all of whom currently teach on the research training programme, are now engaged in writing drafts of the learning materials. Although there are a couple of staff who have had some experience of writing materials, the majority have not. In the project's first term we held a workshop with our writers (or 'course team') to enable them to set the agenda for the project and its progress in the first year. An early decision was to concentrate on producing written text-based materials in the first instance, which could then be developed using other media during the pilot stage of the project. This meant that we could adopt a developmental approach to materials production but it also sat alongside the tight time and budgetary constraints for the first year of the project.

In order to provide the writers with guidance on how to approach the development of the materials we invited an external consultant to facilitate a workshop for us during which we investigated some of the different approaches to designing open/distance learning materials as well as planning out a realistic timetable for the work. Once all the writers have produced a first draft of their work we intend to hold a follow up workshop where the writers discuss the work carried out so far and attempt to resolve any issues/problems that are arising from it.

Our survey reveals that the majority of our part-time students are, in fact, employed as educational practitioners primarily in schools, colleges and universities. How we approached the development of materials needed to reflect this situation and that students were undertaking research work in areas related to their practice.

The type of approach traditionally taken to the design of distance learning materials is that which Rowntree terms 'the tutorial-in-print' (Rowntree 1994) where materials tend to consist of large chunks of text written by an 'expert' often with questions and answers for the student to address/work through. This approach was not considered to be an appropriate one for our students, for a number of reasons. For example we wanted to encourage students to interact with the text and to create their own texts rather than present them with a relatively static/fixed set of knowledge; and we wanted students to be able to link their research in their substantive topic areas, their experience as practitioners/researchers and the conceptual ideas presented in the text. The question then arose: how then could we facilitate a more experiential learning approach through the materials that we developed?

Thorpe's (1993) recent article addressed some of the issues that we were considering through outlining how she attempted to incorporate experiential learning into a diploma module at the Open University. She adopted a number of

strategies to encourage students to relate their experiences with the theory covered in the material and to reflect on both. These included decreasing the amount of text within the materials and increasing the amount of time that students spent on activities and assignments.

This activity-based approach is one which we have adopted using the technique of 'signposting' to guide students through the material and the activities to be undertaken. We have also thought that it may be possible to encourage students to, in some way, add to the materials that we produce by for example, commenting on a particular methodology or giving examples of what they had done. Students could then indicate whether they would be happy to discuss this with other students, and if so how they could be contacted.

Some remaining issues

A number of issues are not yet finally resolved, for example: how do we determine the study time for each module? At the moment we have settled on a fairly arbitrary figure of 20-40 hours per unit which is based on the current programme's class contact time and which will need to be reviewed when the first drafts of the material are ready. The main difficulties that I perceive here are that the activity-based approach does not necessarily correspond with sitting in a classroom and that some of the activities that the writers devise may take students more time to complete that we envisage.

In addition, we decided not to produce materials for a unit on 'Research processes and skills' because we felt that this would be better delivered through face-to-face contact with students at a residential/starter weekend. This would also serve to bring students together near the beginning of their research and make contact with academic staff. However, this will not necessarily be suitable for those students who live at a great distance from the University and so we still need to address how we might deliver this unit at a distance.

I have not addressed the question of assessment during this paper because at present it is students' final submitted PhD which is assessed rather than the learning that takes place during the research training programme. It may be that at the point when we design guidance for the use of the materials we will need to again consider whether we should introduce an assessment strategy alongside the materials.

The work that I am doing is, in a very real sense, in its early stages and there are a number of areas which I myself am unsure as to how they will be resolved. In many ways, what I have outlined is the preparation for further work, to take place during the pilot stage of the project, which will need to look at how students actually use the materials in practice and whether our attempts to reduce the feelings of isolation that many part-time students experience are successful.

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Changes in adult and continuing education in New Zealand Universities over the last decade

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Introduction

This paper, using socio-historical analysis, traces the recent major changes in the political and economic context of New Zealand society, the current transitions in this country's universities and the impact upon adult and continuing education in these locations. It will be argued that while recent changes in adult/continuing education provision are not necessarily directly attributable to the wider societal changes, they are heavily pressurising adult educators into a managerial model which may have irreversible consequences for social-democratic practices.

The Broad Societal Context

As for most western countries, social change in New Zealand has been dramatic. For many years it stood aloof through geographical isolation from international forces but has increasingly been captured by them. Traditionally New Zealanders have espoused egalitarianism and equality of (educational) opportunity as part of a classless society, but in the 1990s the stark reality is that the political and economic changes implemented by recent governments (the Fourth Labour Government, 1984-1990; the current National Government) have helped create a new society of marked differences in wealth. What have been the dominant forces?

When the Fourth Labour Government took power in 1984 it inherited huge debt Roger Douglas, the then Finance Minister, implemented stringent economic policies - later dubbed 'Rogernomics' - to cut public expenditure and reset New Zealand's economic path to recovery. Over the six years of what was supposedly a social welfarist government there were major 'streamlining' practices such as the sale of public assets, privatisation and downsizing of Government departments and the implementation of user pays across many sectors. Under the six years of 'Rogernomics' (similar to 'Thatcherism') the New Right ideology of the 'minimal state' was implemented (Lauder, 1990).

Snook (1989) provides a useful analysis of these recent trends. While the patterns describe the state-provided education system, the trends are also indicative of adult and continuing education in New Zealand. Snook points to these features:

- the education system has become part of the market where 'choice' determines quality.
- much more accountability or responsibility is located at the local 'face-to-face' level with decision-making devolved to local groups. While continuing to control and monitor the state washes its hands of responsibility for outcomes.
- Education is perceived as a privilege, not a right. Since education benefits the individual it should be paid for, in part at least, by the individual.
- Control and responsibility are to be more cogent than freedom and self-evaluation. Charters have been incorporated into every educational institution across all levels.

While these political and economic imperatives of the New Right are pervasive in contemporary New Zealand, there are counterbalancing tendencies. Special features of New Zealand life include a longstanding commitment to equality, the traditional strength of the central state in welfare, health and education and the current drives towards biculturalism (Novitz & Willmott, 1989; Snook, 1989). In particular, the Treaty of Waitangi, signed between Pakeha (Europeans) and Maori in 1840, has recently come to act as a founding document to help promote Maori sovereignty and to redress inequities (e.g. land confiscations). The Labour Government, while implementing a policy of market liberalism, was simultaneously operating policies of social equity - especially in education - primarily aimed at honouring the principles of the Treaty. Since the re-election of the National Government in 1990 the emphasis on social equity has noticeably softened, exemplified by the relatively minor place given to Maori concerns in *Education for the 21st Century* (Ministry of Education, 1993).

The Universities in New Zealand.

The extent of change within the higher education sector in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been considerable and more is likely to come. A very recent *Campus Review* encapsulates this momentum:

> 'Higher education in New Zealand is facing the likelihood of a new round of reform following a lull after the turbulence of 1990-92. As the sector stands poised awaiting the verdict of the Todd Review, and institutions find their feet in the new national framework of qualifications, many within universities, colleges and polytechnics are preparing to fend off further advances by education rationalists.' (Rivers, 1 March, 1994).

What is behind the above statement? In accord with the wider societal trends, universities have undergone major changes. Government's stated objective has been to increase the number of school leavers in tertiary education to better equip the New Zealand workforce for international competition. Given this imperative, the number of students has expanded significantly in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education (formerly Teachers' Colleges) and Private Training Establishments (PTEs). Following *Learning for Life 2* (Goff, 1989) and the reforms heralded by the Education Amendment Act 1990, tertiary institutions have been funded via the Ministry of Education (which replaced the former Department of Education but with narrower functions) and have competed for funding based on Equivalent Full-time Students (EFTS). For the seven universities there is no longer a University Grants Committee but common issues are dealt with via the New Zealand Universities Vice-Chancellors' Committee.

In the new regime of open competition between tertiary providers the universities are reluctantly entering a 'new cult of efficiency' (Bates, 1990). How has this cult been manifested? While there are many inter-related processes and mechanisms being employed, the following recent changes are examples:

- The implementation of Study Right for school leavers in 1991. The government implemented a scheme whereby school leavers and mature students were differentiated into study right/non-study right categories. Institutions obtain more funding from the Ministry of Education for school leavers than for mature students. In effect, this mechanism is a disincentive for mature age students to return to study and might better be labelled 'Study Denial'.
- The initiation of the Student Loan Scheme after which the fees escalated in 1991 from around $400 per student per year to about $2100 in 1994. Currently students pay an average 15% of the cost of their programme . Since this scheme began the indebtedness of students has risen considerably.
- The funds directly available to University staff for research have been reduced. A dwindling resource still exists within the university system but for substantive research funds academics have to contest through various sources such as the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FORST) where universities compete with other agencies such as the newly developed Crown Research Institutes (CRIs).
- Academic conditions of work generally have been eroded despite the opposition of the Association for University Staff. The staff-student ratios stand at around 1:20 and salaries have been effectively frozen over the last five years. The criteria for promotion have been considerably tightened. For many university staff there has been quite noticeable intensification of work as student numbers have climbed. Importantly too, the advent of the Employment Contracts Act in 1991, whereby employees contract as individuals with their employers, has reduced the power of unions and the prospects for collective bargaining.
- Within universities there is greater devolution of responsibility to faculties and departments in financial decision-making. This has resulted in greater administrative loads for many staff. The need for academic staff to be more engaged in administration is compounded by the low general staff to academic ratio.
- The striving for 'excellence' in the higher education sector has resulted in greater attention to charters, mission statements, strategic planning and quality management approaches (e.g. Total Quality Management) as tertiary providers find ways to enhance 'quality'.

At present a 10 member ministerially-appointed group - known as the Todd taskforce - has been convened to recommend ways the government can meet the costs of growth in the tertiary sector. Suggestions of a radical user-pays proposal, an expanded student loan scheme and a 'learner entitlement' scheme (voucher plan) have been recorded in local press. Other plans in the pipeline which will impact upon universities, if implemented, include a capital charge on university plant and buildings, voluntary student unionism and the continuing trend of polytechnics 'to behave like universities' as in awarding degrees.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) - another new government agency established to try to implement a standard qualifications framework across all education sectors - has recently been introduced. This organisation has embarked on an ambitious overhaul of the qualifications system intended to combine industry training and tertiary education under the same roof. 'Unit standards' are registered on one of eight levels of the framework ranging from fifth form (age 15) through to postgraduate study. Currently universities are strongly resisting the pressure to become enveloped within the framework on the grounds of threatened autonomy. Ultimately the price of this decision may be too high as adult/continuing education students seek educational programmes from 'accredited providers' rather than through universities.

Adult and Continuing Education in the Universities

The history of the establishment of university-based adult/continuing education in this country is complex though it is probably true to state that the British extra-mural, liberal adult education model (see Fordham, 1983; Taylor et al., 1985) was that which has predominated until quite recently, especially in the 'traditional' universities. Universities in the main centres all developed 'university extension' and employed academic staff with subject specialities to take university knowledge to the people.

Centres for continuing education are much more recent sub-organisations within the universities. Modelled more explicitly on the American prototype (see Bagnall (1978) for an extended discussion) their primary purpose has been to interact with the university's diverse publics to plan and implement programmes which better reflect the public's learning needs and interests and the university's expertise and resources. There are particular characteristics which define the uniqueness of each centre. Factors affecting idiosyncratic development have included: the parent institution's ethos and history; the relative importance of adult/continuing education as a function of each university; the physical and infrastructural positions of the centre; the leadership of various directors; the extent of embeddedness of the unit within local and national communities. In the last two years both Canterbury and Victoria Universities have undergone external reviews which have in essence rendered each into centres for continuing education almost free of academic staff (O'Rourke, 1992; Holborow, 1992). The recommended changes have rid the organisation of most vestiges of the 'old' model.

While there are individual differences in emphases, the following are significant changes within university-based adult/continuing education:

1. The funding basis for centres has moved to a very strong user pays basis. At Auckland, for example, the Centre generates 84% of its income; after the Review at Canterbury that Centre has been directed to implement a fuller cost recovery regime. While the autonomy of centres may have increased with the devolution of financial management, the impact on the types and level of provision is strong. Inevitably, the costs are passed on to the learner and the consequence of this is to affect the ability of the marginalised to participate. An example of this consequence is the reduction of students enrolled in the Certificate in Maori Studies programme offered regionally by the University of Waikato (see Findsen (1992) for details of this programme).
2. The nature of 'curriculum' is changing. At Waikato in the 1970s and 1980s there was a very coherent and multi-faceted non-credit regional programme which constituted about half of professional staff's efforts. Now this regional programming has been significantly pruned back and has been largely sidelined by the Centre's role as the administration unit for credit-granting distance education. Across the system there have been advances in the programmes which have greater income-generating capacity such as continuing professional education, conference administration, Elderhostel and College for Seniors, educational tourism and summer school programmes. At the same time there has been a diminution in some centres' commitment to community development, social issues programmes and there are signs of cutting back in the liberal education provision. Counterbalancing this trend away from social democratic provision has been the maintenance system-wide of social equity programmes in access (such as New Start).
3. The place of research and teaching for staff employed within centres has remained ambiguous until recently. By and large the prerogative of teaching in credit and degree programmes and the conducting of research has been the role of academics. After the reviews at both Canterbury and Victoria it became plain that academic staff employed under the 'old' model of university extension no longer 'fitted' into the new managerial model. The issue of teaching and research in adult education has been untidily resolved. Academic positions for this specialty exist at Auckland (CCE), Waikato (Department of Education Studies), Victoria (Department of Education) and Canterbury (CCE). No separate

academic adult/continuing education department exists in New Zealand and those four individuals who work as academics do so in great isolation.

4. The move to make centres more streamlined 'efficient' organisations is consistent with the user pays regime and has demanded a renewed focus on quality issues. At Victoria where a new director has begun in 1994 there are clear expectations that she develop a strategic developmental plan and institute a thorough programme review. The former CCE Advisory Board is to be replaced by a Continuing Education Management Board with responsibility for constructing continuing education policy. At Auckland, prior to its first external review for over a decade, the new director is similarly instituting a strategic plan and he hopes to implement total quality management practices in the near future.

5. The appropriateness of qualification (certificate) programmes in centre provision is open to question when academic staff have been moved out of all but two of these units. There is still a strong element of credit provision at Auckland where there are 4.2 academic staff. These staff have provided the conceptual apparatus for the development of programmes in adult education, training and HRD, women's studies and school leadership and administer and often teach in them. At Waikato senior staff provide administrative expertise but the teaching is usually undertaken by staff in academic departments. These qualification courses act as an important bridging mechanism for mature students towards degree completion. In addition, the future of the training of adult educators through non-credit and certificate programmes is at risk unless universities make the effort to preserve this service to the field. Fortunately at Auckland there is currently a proposal for a new Bachelor of Adult and Higher Education degree which is currently being channelled through the University hierarchy for approval. Its primary impetus has come from the need to provide appropriate credentials for under-qualified tutors in the polytechnic system.

Conclusion

Adult and continuing education has not been shielded from the effects of 'restructuring', privatisation and downsizing of organisations apparent in New Zealand society and the universities in particular. In the modern quest for greater accountability, efficiency and managerialism, centres for continuing education have been challenged by the pervading economic ideology. Arguably, these new organisational units have been engineered to be more responsive to community learning needs using professional programme planners as the catalyst for effecting personal and social change. The changes observed so far suggest that the swing towards economic self-sufficiency and administrative efficiency are placing at severe risk the democratic ethos of the sector. Those programmes which require creativity, endurance and a heightened social conscience to make work, typically for the more 'marginalised' groups in society, should not be sacrificed.

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What's in a word? Education for adults

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This paper is written against a strong personal belief in the value of opening up the Higher Education system to all. The introduction of the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) is a big step towards this and as such I find it an exciting and worthwhile development. One result of the shift in practice which the introduction of CATS involves, is that those of us working in Adult Education must enquire into and reflect upon what motivates our students and ourselves: what happens when a group of adults meets to discuss, in my case, a literary text written in English? What effect will the introduction of assessment have on those students who currently attend classes in English Literature?

With this in mind, I carried out a survey of people attending non-award bearing Literature classes in the Wessex area in Week 9 of the Spring term of 1994. I asked what were their reasons for undertaking this current course of study and their opinions on the possible introduction of assessment and award into such courses. The findings brought into focus vitally problematic areas for future developments to which I will return at the end of this paper. For the most part however, I wish to explore the language we use when dealing with these issues and question its impact upon current thinking in Adult Education.

'Adult Education', 'Continuing Education', 'Lifelong Learning': such are the phrases which have formed in response to attempts to describe what it is that happens in our study groups. However, these phrases, along with such terms as 'adult returners', 'mature students' or 'non-standard students' are never entirely satisfactory, they assume too much, exclude too much and I would argue that it is the education metaphor itself which lies at the root of the difficulty in terms of explaining what those of us engaged in this business, students, researchers and tutors alike, do. Once the question of the language which we habitually use is brought into focus, none of our terminology is safe. Are 'we' teachers, tutors, lecturers? Are 'they' students, group-members, customers? Do we meet in classes, in discussion groups, or on courses?

The Second Edition of *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary* (1991) gives four definitions for the word 'education':

1. The process of nourishing or rearing a child or young person or animal
2. the process of bringing up young persons
3. ...the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life; by extension, similar instruction or training obtained in adult age
4. ...[from sense 3 influenced by sense 2, sometimes influenced by the quasi-etymological notion 'drawing out'] Culture of development of powers, formation of character, as contrasted with the imparting of mere knowledge or skill. Often with limiting word such as intellectual, moral or physical.

Interestingly, the first example given by the dictionary of the usage of the word 'education' in its fourth, broader sense comes from John Stuart Mill writing in *Considerations on Representative Government* in 1861:

> 'Among the foremost benefits of free government is the education of the intelligence and of the sentiments.'

Many things happened to the word 'education' in nineteenth century Britain; two are of interest here. Firstly, rather than being perceived as something belonging to the elite, something which divided them from the masses, a basic education became, for political thinkers such as Mill, essential for all citizens as a pre-requisite for the beneficial government of free societies: a necessary step to prevent chaos.[1] The second shift is hinted at above by the use of the phrase 'quasi etymological notion of 'drawing out',' which overdetermined the word with added connotations based on the meaning and usage of the Latin word 'educare'. As with many things happening at that time in the study of language, a didactic paternalism can be sensed behind expressly liberal claims. The Latin roots of the word 'educate' were assiduously traced, and an extra dimension to the English term was added as a consequence. However, the common usage of the English word has never fully adjusted to its newly elevated status and educational processes remain in the minds of most native speakers the absorption of facts and the learning of skills rather than the nurturing of innate, latent abilities. This slippage between exegesis and comprehension largely accounts for the easy acceptance of the utilitarian

rhetoric surrounding the purposes of Adult Education in the 'classless society' of Nineties Britain.

The pity of all this is that both aspects of education are as important to today's society (albeit for different reasons) as they were when Mill was writing in 1861. Society has moved on; what it needs from and demands of its citizens, if good representative government of a free society is to flourish, are a complex set of critical powers and informed responses which University Adult Education Departments are currently well situated to sustain and develop. But the confusion of terminologies around the concept of education has willed a legacy to those of us working in the Adult field in the last years of the twentieth century. The proposed introduction of accredited courses has led me to think that we must break down what now goes by the name of Adult Education in order to reveal the causes of the current stresses within the system.

The dictionary's first two definitions relate to children and are of no concern here. Accredited courses would fit well under the third definition of education given above, allowing the phrase 'by extension similar instruction or training obtained in adult age' to stand, since under the CAT Scheme, a high level of academic guidance and fixed course requirements will mean that the culture of that type of Adult Education must necessarily reflect activities in Higher Education institutions across the country.

It is the fourth definition: 'Culture of development of powers, formation of character, as contrasted with the imparting of mere knowledge or skill' which is under threat and in danger of being lost. This danger exists because these processes of development and formation, whilst contained within and contributing to education are not exclusive to it. Indeed it could be argued that one main purpose of education is to assist an individual to acquire and continually refine such developmental, formative powers. Education in the sense of the acquisition of knowledge could be regarded as a step on the way to this fourth, higher, state.

Independent of education this 'development of powers, formation of character' constitutes a completely different set of human abilities and desires to those which lead us to acquire 'mere knowledge or skill'. What is referred to here is a still, reflective process which may have neither temporal continuity nor linear progression. The need for reflection and growth becomes urgent or falls away, following no calendar other than a responsive attending to the individual patterns which constitute a life. This is not a finite process which can be worked at for three years, examined and certified. It is the continuous process of responsive growth which society needs from its citizens throughout their lives. It is precisely the quality of reflective development which provided the theme for the 1993 SCUTREA conference.

This gathering, formation, fashioning of the Self within life and society must be separately identified as an integral but also an independently valuable part of what currently goes by the term Adult Education. Perhaps the German word 'bildung' might be appropriate here. The English sense of education is contained within the term 'bildung', but comes in fourth place behind such words as 'to form, shape, fashion, mould, create, make' The primary English sense 'the process of nourishing or rearing a child' is ranked far behind its other meanings: the reverse of the English definition of the word 'education'.

In addition, there is also the reflexive form of the verb, 'sich bildung' meaning 'to educate oneself; to cultivate, improve, one's mind.' This is no solitary activity but can happen to all members of a group discussing a text as well as when each individual reads that text alone. This denotes an active participation rather than passive absorption. I would argue that this process is the highly prized, culturally based 'drawing out' to which the term 'education' lays claim but is proving entirely inadequate to describe. This is the 'Liberal' side of Adult Education, (another term which ought to be interrogated), the side which is becoming increasingly marginalised and starved. This aspect of our work must be independently, thoroughly analysed, assessed, prized and protected.

Critical techniques are culturally based, the 'market forces' metaphor is no exception. It is simply a part of the cultural and political 'here and now'. It is not a final truth. Culture does not 'progress', it operates its own dynamic laws which may be said to be no laws at all. Its protean responsiveness means that it constantly re-adapts itself to the feelings of the changing body of humanity which constitutes society at any given time and which is, in turn, influenced by culture. This dialogic relationship between a society and its culture must be recognised for the ephemeral entity it is. T. S. Eliot, (1933) writing in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* said 'our criticism, from age to age, will reflect the things that the age demands.'[2]

The strange malaise which has had Britain in its grip for a decade or more is a mild disorder which will pass. Our care must be to ensure that the patient remains fundamentally well and that no irrevocable damage is done to any vital organs whilst the infection lasts. I would maintain that one such vital organ is the current Adult Education structure, which, for the most part, has continued

its underlying healthy development in spite of the initial shock to its immune system.

I write as one who began by attending a Liberal Adult Education class in 1985 with many partially formed, vague desires. I have been guided into and through Higher Education. During my journey, I have seen many paths of opportunity close up behind me as supports such as subsidised child-care, a reasonable mandatory grant and good employment prospects have slipped away. Yet at the moment, through the introduction of the CAT Scheme, I can also see alternative pathways opening up. The concern must be to maintain the quality of what we already have so that the fresh cohort of students who will be attracted into the Universities by this initiative will find a well developed system waiting for them and one which will respond to their distinctive demands.

The system as it now stands in mainstream Higher Education does not cater well for mature students, continuing to perceive its main role as being the education of young adults.[3] Currently in place in Departments of Adult Education are courses which cater for all levels of learning ability and competence. This brings me back to the survey of Literature classes mentioned at the beginning of the paper which prompted me to analyse what is meant by Adult Education.

Attending Literature classes on that day were people of widely varying academic abilities. One woman had returned to Literature after decades away from study, prompted by a desire to write. Another woman had two degrees and three postgraduate qualifications. These women were in the same group, working competently together, certainly acquiring knowledge and skill but at the same time, and for my current purposes, more importantly, engaging with each other, with the group and with their tutor in a process of reflective growth. The woman with no academic qualifications did not want any, she wished to spend her time writing creatively. Clearly the other woman had no need of CATS credits.

Liberal courses as they now stand are places where people go before, during and after work in traditional Higher Education. One member of the Poetry class on that day was a full-time doctoral student working in Physics.

Our students join our classes because of a desire to continue their personal development in a chosen direction. Not needing or wanting an academic qualification should not disqualify them from access to this vitally important aspect of modern society. The CAT Scheme will hopefully draw people into reflective learning who would not otherwise come to it. What must be safeguarded, however, are courses which help to prepare students for work at degree level and help them to choose an appropriate direction. Of equal importance is that the already educated, (and this will, a few years from now, include today's newcomers) are not disenfranchised and excluded from a vital community resource.

Notes

1. This paper cannot interrogate the value systems which underpinned Mill's thinking, only draw attention to his historical importance in the education debate
2. Quoted in Baldick, C (1983) p. 6
3. For discussions of this see Duke: C (1992) also Edwards, R (1993)

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Making the familiar strange

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Introduction

The tradition of liberal adult education (LAE) developed in Britain at a time when the extension movement enabled a few committed individuals from the universities to nourish the joy of learning among people excluded from higher education. The emphasis was on learning as an intrinsic value in its own right: education was not a prelude to some other advantage such as an academic qualification or a better trained workforce; it was an end in itself rather than a means to an end. These generalisations naturally conceal many subtleties of interpretation, but the general intention of LAE was maintained during a century in which educational opportunities for formerly excluded groups expanded. Other forms of education for adults developed as adjuncts to 'the great tradition'. Britain had a narrow definition of adult education which rejected the qualification and training work that was central to continuing education in some other countries.

British adult educators retained this commitment to the centrality of LAE despite the adoption of such titles as continuing education, recurrent education and *éducation permanente*. More recently, the structural context within which adult education is provided has changed to match the realities that have broken through the constraints of the traditional LAE paradigm. First, there has been a growth of adult training at every level from youth training through to post-experience, professional development. Second, the funding arrangements both for further and higher education have been changed in ways that make it more difficult to maintain traditional LAE provision either in universities or in local education authorities. The emphasis in the future will be on either vocational education or award-bearing courses. In addition, there will be some support for adults with special educational needs and for courses 'in disadvantaged areas, since [they] can have a valuable social function' (DES 1991, Vol.I: 9). The wider content of adult education has been redefined as 'courses for the leisure interests of adults' (ibid) and as such will be expected to be self-supporting. Publicly supported adult education, in other words, has been re-defined in *instrumental* terms as supportive of the economic or social health of the country.

In the context of changing government requirements, adult educators need to make a positive response if they are to retain the values of LAE within the new environment of training and qualifications. The rival protagonists of self-development and instrumental education have too often contemplated each other warily as strangers: the revived interest in the significance of reflective skills in the learning process can provide a mediating bridge to unify the two positions.

Reflection

At the heart of issues surrounding reflection is the distinction between the knower and the known: subject and object (James 1975). The knower (subject) can only gain complete understanding of the known (object) when he or she approaches into close proximity or absorbs the known into his or her own realm of knowing. Barthes writes of the language of the wood cutter who 'speaks the tree' he is felling; 'but if I am not a woodcutter, I can no longer 'speak the tree', I can only speak *about* it, *on* it' (1973: 159. Original emphasis). This concept of knowledge postulates an end or, to be more rigorous, a series of ends (James 1975: 63-4), beyond which no more knowledge would be sought or needed. James explains that while our knowing 'never is completed or nailed down ... *To continue thinking unchallenged is, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, our practical substitute for knowing in the completed sense*' (1975: 67. Original emphasis). This unchallenged thinking, our 'taken-as-givens', presents the challenge for adult educators as they seek to integrate student experience into the learning process. The woodcutter may 'speak the tree' but the knowing is never completed.

The various models of experiential learning conceptualise the interaction between experience and learning through the process of reflection. Thus Kolb identifies four dimensions - concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation - underlying the process of experiential learning and the resulting forms of knowledge (1984:42). Honey and Mumford (1986) use Kolb's approach to identify four learning styles related to the four dimensions of experiential learning. Presenting a process in this way conceals the integrated nature of the activity. As Usher puts it, for a slightly

different purpose, 'we can only teach about research if we are teaching *for* research' (1989:137. Original emphasis). Our reflection only takes concrete form as we express it in a particular context. The conceptual development of this paper, for example, emerged through the process of writing: reflection, conceptualisation and writing could not be separated *in practice*, even if they appear as logically discrete steps (cf. Manen 1990: 124-7). The integration of experience and reflection has implications for adult education and training. The context of the experience affects the quality of the reflection. Powell in her study of the reflective practitioner in nursing, for example, examines the practice of a group of nurses against Mezirow's hierarchical levels of reflectivity. These levels range from simple awareness through to theoretical reflectivity which reveals the 'taken-for-granted' assumptions as a basis for 'perspective transformation' (Mezirow 1981: 6-9). The nurses working in a structured hospital context were less likely than those working on their own initiative in the community to engage in the higher levels of reflection and to be aware of opportunities for learning (Powell 1989: 828).

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In order to reflect we must 'notice' our experience within the context of our 'learning intent'. Such 'noticing' will include an awareness of 'what is happening both *in* and *around* oneself' (Boud and Walker 1990: 68. Our emphasis). To become aware in this way we need to step outside our 'taken-as-givens'; to become strangers to our own experience. The role of the adult educator is to facilitate this learning in a non-threatening environment (Usher 1986: 27-9; Boud and Walker 1990: 72).

Trainers use techniques such as critical incident analysis to stimulate noticing and reflection but the approach, if not the language, is common in many aspects of LAE. The geologist reveals the age-old structure beneath familiar, taken-for-granted, landscapes; the local historian shows us how to notice the patterns and remains that identify the influence of earlier social arrangements; the literature tutor encourages us to reflect on the meaning of a play or novel. Many of these activities enable learners to enter a closer relationship with their environment and thus encourage a process of critical reflection. This process is aided by discussion with people who live a different experience from our own. The role of 'group discussion' in both training and LAE is central to the distinction between continuing and initial education.

Group Learning

The tradition of group learning in LAE may become problematic as we move towards a greater emphasis on qualification courses. In traditional academic work, individual achievement is often valued at the expense of group work as if thought was analogous to an athletics contest where one person comes first. The analogy, of course, is inappropriate. Even the most idiosyncratic of thinkers develop their ideas within a social climate. 'Great men', or women, get the credit, but this is more a search for a hero than a measure of reality. The potential reflective strengths of group work need to enter discussions of accreditation within LAE.

Critical reflection as a process of reaching *in* to the self and *out* to others can result both in a dynamic and creative group and in individual growth. An individual can be supported in her/his personal path on an award-bearing course, or each individual member, drawing on her/his experience, skill, and learning can contribute towards a group product which can be assessed. Rogers refers to the strength that an individual group member can offer another, by making available his/her understanding, support, experience and care (Rogers 1983: 208). We will refer to one example of this form of learning help. The learner co-operated with a co-worker to keep individual diaries of a training programme for Equal Opportunities into which he was researching for an MEd dissertation. His co-worker was female and from a different ethnic background. A reading of his methodological chapter revealed a number of examples of the learning which arose from this joint activity. The activity resulted in personal growth and cognitive development for both of them. They attained learning consistent with Habermas' third area of cognitive interest:

> '... the knowledge of self-reflection, including interest in the way one's history and biography has expressed itself in the way one sees oneself, one's roles and social expectations' (Mezirow 1981:5).

Because of his open reflection on the co-operative process, the joint work strengthened, rather than interfered with, the individual assessment for the MEd (Chapman 1994).

Possibilities for new forms of assessment also exist already within traditional non-award bearing courses, but are such a familiar part of our practices that they are not 'noticed'. Individual members of a local history group, for example, will contribute specific items, interviews, literature searches, or census returns to a work-in-progress portfolio which is an explicit statement of standards and learner achievement (Unwin 1994). Group work of this nature presents us with our

greatest challenge not only in terms of assessment, but also with the need to re-define words such as 'vocational' and 'award bearing'. High levels of unemployment have forced learners to value all their skills. Handy refers to an individual's range of skills as a portfolio which he classifies into five main work areas: wage work, fee work, home work, gift work, and study work (Handy 1990:146). Taken together with Local Economic Trading Schemes (LETS), which take place outside the monetary system, the updating, acquisition, and assessment of an enormous range of skills may acquire a special meaning for LAE learners. An evaluation of the range of one's skills may be the starting point for self-assessment and reflective activity both in terms of personal growth and vocational potential.

Conclusion

Changes in government policy and funding have made facilitators and learners strangers in a once familiar environment and together we are forced to make a proactive, reflective response to change. Change can be uncomfortable and negative, or a mental adventure:

> 'We have to be caught off guard, put at risk, shocked, in order to be jolted out of the limiting boundaries of our formulaic perceptions of the world' (Hospital, 1993:40).

The approach adopted in this paper is not uncontentious; those concerned with training, for example, from the TUC to the Training Agency, often value techniques above interpretation - the how above the why. The learning does not take place in a questioning environment. Within LAE, the move to qualifications will demand staff commitment and dedication to organisational development if changes in practices are to occur in an organic way. We cannot simply tack-on superficial assessments to courses designed for other purposes. Reflection can marry the two concepts of training and LAE. The interest among trainers in reflection as a training method gives an LAE, developmental dimension to training activities. On the other hand, the concept of critical reflection may allow us to defend the values of LAE against the didactic influence of accreditation. But we cannot 'continue thinking unchallenged' in the comfort of this marriage. Nor can we underestimate the work that has to be done in re-negotiating a flexible and imaginative contract both with learners and with those responsible for accrediting our programmes.

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Education in the market place: from education to production

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Introduction

The context in which higher educational curricula are developed is one which is characterised by political, social, cultural, educational and structural tensions. These tensions proceed from externally imposed constraints and imperatives and internally generated concerns, which have arisen as a result of the political and economic forces of capitalism. Educational institutions and teachers are being forced to adopt a new set of values - the values of the market place where the search for capital for financial survival apparently transcends all else.

Within this context, higher education teachers, who have traditionally laid claim to cultural authority, and are now required to devise a response which is both critical and constructive. They are faced with an ideological challenge from which, according to Winter (1993), they cannot simply retreat into past forms of rhetoric, which espouses lost ideals, nor can they collude with a social system whose confusion is clearly apparent.

The move away from traditional forms of education, for example, the higher education for capability, competencies and learning outcomes approaches, has, it is argued, forced institutions to reconsider their role. The ultimate logic of an outcome driven system would suggest that institutions must become mere assessment centres, rather than repositories of knowledge and places where the 'experts' and students gather for exchange of that knowledge.

The rapid growth in credit accumulation and transfer systems, apart from creating debates about the process of education and assumptions about coherence and integration, has provided consumers with opportunities for customised education provision which meets both individual and organisational needs.

It is interesting to note that the many of the significant changes of contemporary education initiatives in Britain emanate from the Department of Employment rather than from the Department of Education (Employment Department 1990). The Department of Employment challenges the restrictive elitism of higher education and urges education 'to support economic growth by promoting a competitive, efficient, and flexible labour market' that has 'employer relevance' and 'high level skills supply' in addition to an 'increased learner responsibility' within a framework of 'continuing professional development' (Employment Department 1990:88).

This paper intends to explore the notion of market power focusing upon notions of education as a commodity against the background of the continuous transformation of the socio-political and economic agenda.

Manufacturing Education Commodities

Traditional education, as defined by academics, evolved in a time of collective ideals and values. It was designed for a mass society. However, some are already experiencing the de-massification characteristics of an advanced economy. In the latter, consumers demand greater individualisation and customisation of products and shun certain homogeneous goods or services.

Once upon a time wealth and capital were material. Bankers would look for 'hard assets' as security for investing money. But as services and information sectors grow in the advanced economies, as manufacturing is computerised, the nature of wealth necessarily changes. No one invests in the machinery of Apple Computers, for example, but in the power of its marketing and sales force, the organisational capacity of its management, and the ideas inside the heads of its employees. Toffler (1990:60-62) suggests that the shift to knowledge capital explodes the assumptions underpinning both Marxist ideology and classical economies, premised on the finite character of traditional capital. Knowledge, unlike machines which can only be used by one person or company at a time, can be used by many different users at the same time. Knowledge which is inherently inexhaustible and non-exclusive is in high demand.

By speeding up the responsiveness of the organisation to the market and making short runs economical, better and more instantaneous information makes it possible to reduce the amount of educational components, including teachers, sitting in the 'warehouses'. Educational technology can be used effectively to increase productivity, increase the market share and student numbers dramatically. This in turn reduces the needs for raw materials, labour, time, space and capital. Knowledge becomes the central resource of the

advanced economy and as this happens, its value soars. For this reason, Toffler (1990:91) explains, struggles for control of knowledge are breaking out everywhere.

Once any process is technologically produced, it becomes, Jarvis (1993) argues, an object or commodity within a capitalist economy. Its value is determined by its capacity for being marketed for profit, rather than by its usefulness in contributing to 'genuine' human need.

Braverman (1974:109) reflects on a period when 'the worker was presumed to be the master of a body of traditional knowledge, and methods and procedures were left to his or her discretion'. He argues that the process of industrialisation has entailed a sustained and successful attempt by management to impose rigid control over the production process by subdividing the complexities of craft into simple stages, none of which allows the worker to take responsibility for the total process. Decisions about the production process are taken centrally by management through their control of complex equipment which in turn dictates the 'methods and procedures' required.

From the workers' point of view, work becomes fragmentary, and its meaning is displaced from an awareness of its contribution to human needs. This scenario has resonance for those educators grappling with modular developments which allow students and their employers to construct their own 'customised' courses by selecting their own combination of modules. This means that lecturers no longer have responsibility for designing a sequence of learning experiences which might impact upon student lives. Rather, they merely make available a defined fraction of expertise within a computerised system of options. Gone is the general authority of the individual educator; instead staff are brokers for commodities within an 'educational hypermarket' which may or may not be selected by the student or their employer-as-customer.

The turnover time of capital, Harvey (1992) suggests, is a universal incentive for individual capitalists to accelerate their turnover in comparison with the social average, thus promoting an upward trend in turnover times. In this context, the adaptability and flexibility of the employee becomes vital to continued organisational and capital development. Workers can now look forward to periods of de-skilling and re-skilling as the notion of acquiring a skill for life is no longer tenable.

Government policies have enabled employers to control educational provision through the contracting mechanism. Therefore, in the new purchaser-provider relationship, practitioners who are at the centre of the effective implementation of management strategies, become the target for specific role preparation which requires 'tailor-made' educational provision. Employers play a key role in identifying and purchasing programmes of study deemed suitable for achieving organisational needs. They also control the numbers of students entering education through the process of matching educational provision to 'manpower' requirements.

The impact of employer-led curriculum development has forced further and higher education institutions to compete in the market place, each producing educational products which will meet the demands for flexibility, relevancy and 'value for money'. Traditional courses now have limited marketability hence the escalation of diversified products such as open and distance learning materials, customer designed packages, tailored to individual or cohort need. Franchising arrangements and work-based learning programmes have introduced a new line in commodities to satisfy consumer demands. Alongside these developments is the accreditation of in-company education programmes which enables workers to achieve higher education credits towards initial and postgraduate degrees on the one hand and a national vocational award on the other.

The currency of education, namely that of the 'credit' has now impacted strongly in the market place. Accreditation reflects the ethos of consumerism and functionality claims Jarvis (1994), creating new boundaries around higher education and resulting in a new group of socially excluded. Accreditation controls provision and in a culture that is producing more and more eager consumers, universities should be careful to be entrepreneurial without the amorality of the market (Jarvis 1994).

Credit and modularity were initially introduced as a means of achieving student focused learning, access to higher education, especially for the disadvantaged, and continuing education opportunities for the community at large. More recently, and partly in reaction to NCVQs competency challenge, educationalists have looked towards an outcomes approach as a means of clarifying educational objectives and assessment processes, facilitating credit-rated processes, and achieving quality assurance. It is only within the last year that resource management pressure has become a significant factor in the academic debate.

Meanwhile the right wing strategies, especially at government level, have seen credit-rated developments as a means of taking power over the educational process away from the academic institutions and transferring it to consumers, whether they be individual students or employers. They have relished and encouraged the challenge to the notion that academics are the sole 'owners'

or 'guardians' of higher educational processes and have applauded the recognition that learning occurs in a variety of contexts, many not controlled by the academics; that others and particularly students and employers have a legitimate interest in defining the nature and coherence of programmes of learning, and that the academic should be less a transmitter of knowledge than a facilitator of student focused learning.

The reduction of education to the description of a 'thing' to be bought and sold, acts as a displacement of meaning. It disguises the fact that the 'thing-like' properties are merely constructs necessitated by the social relationships embodied in the structure of the market, within which alone the commodity has value and meaning.

> 'The market acts as a self-justifying decision-making mechanism, prioritising social activities according to a systematically limited reality, in which the meaning and value of artefacts, actions, and people are reconstructed in terms of the restrictive logic of profit generation.' (Winter, 1993:8)

It will be interesting to note, in the future, the kinds of educational 'products' employers demand, given the perceived time and financial constraints and the view of what is 'really useful knowledge'. The increasing dominance of the 'value for money' culture, the drive towards the measurement of competency and learning outcomes and the growing emphasis upon practical skills may lead employers to purchase skills based material in preference to the more ethereal subjects. Evidence of this and the long term implications, would need to be empirically studied. As Jarvis (1994) would argue, the market is about instrumental rationality which changes the nature of education. It acts to drive out moral action and therein lies the danger of the commoditisation of education. Taken from an instrumental perspective, education only has value when there is an outcome.

Higher education institutions are not averse to using spatial strategies in competition with each other. For example, consider the competition between the universities, colleges of higher and further education who are all chasing scarce resources in a depressed economic climate. The university, or rather 'course' no longer has a geographical boundary. Students can be registered with a university in the south of the country and undertake the educational experience in the north, indeed, anywhere in the world. As Harvey explains,

> 'Domination of marketing networks and spaces remains a fundamental corporate aim, and many a bitter struggle for market share is fought out with the precision of a military campaign to capture territory and space.' (Harvey 1992:234)

The ability to influence and control production is an important means to extend power. In material terms this means that those who can affect the spatial distribution of investments in educational commodities, and the territorial distribution of administrative, political, and economic powers can often reap material and financial rewards. In professional and higher education terms the question needs to be asked: what are the chances of survival for traditional universities who are slow to adopt the new educational order, that is, in terms of credit accumulation and transfer systems, learning outcomes, competencies, marketing goods abroad, taking goods to customer, work-based learning, education for capability, distance and open learning, and so on? The answer lies in the future. And what of quality? Jarvis (1993) argues that the rhetoric of the capitalistic market is one in which commodities of superior quality survive, but in reality, only the largest and the strongest institutions survive, irrespective of product quality.

Concluding comment

The implications for higher education proceed from this vision of the skill requirements. Higher education, in its present form, is not endowed with the organisational structures, decision-making capacity and authority patterns to permit it rapidly to adjust to change that is accelerating and demands that are spiralling. In addition, there is the threat that one's presumably more efficient neighbours already pose to the nation's productive or economic status. Indeed, the rise of the 'market ethic' has been an ideological driving force in higher education policies in Western Europe since the onset of the 1980s and has placed particular weight on this competitive element (Neave 1991a). The notion of an external competitive threat is also mentioned, in one shape or another, in the overwhelming majority of current government documents advocating reform of higher education (Neave 1991b). It also constitutes one of the more powerful impulses behind the emerging higher education policy of the Commission of the European Communities.

Over the past decade and a half, service organisations and education in particular, have been increasingly overwhelmed by what Winter (1993) refers to as the 'reductive rigours of monetarist economics.' The expert authority of educationalists appears to be no longer acceptable

as a basis for the formulation of educational policy. This authority has now been appropriated by the 'market', with the result that education, in company with other public sector services, is condemned, for the foreseeable future, to organise all aspects of its work within the framework of capitalism. The driving goal, certainly within health and education sectors, is 'value for money' as determined by the law of supply and demand.

It is upon this premise that education is now being forced to re-fashion itself and shift from the traditional notion of education to that of commodity production. Teachers in higher education must, therefore, be both critical and constructive of the new order and act to avoid the amorality of the marketplace

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The dance of the tumbleweed: reflections on establishing a reflective practice tutor group

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Background

Schon (1983) argued that professionals are less likely to solve problems by reference to 'academic knowledge' than to their own 'theories-in-use'. These latter are derived from experience and are often both highly individual and unacknowledged. The concept of 'reflective practice' has subsequently been developed as a means of enabling practitioners to articulate and to learn from their theories-in-use and has occasioned particular interest in the fields of education and medicine.

In October 1993, a 10-credit module entitled Becoming a Reflective Practitioner (RP) was introduced into two taught Masters degree programmes in the University of Sheffield. One of these, an MEd in Continuing Education, attracts experienced educators from a variety of settings and is offered in distance learning format; the other, an MMedSci in Clinical Nursing and Midwifery, is designed for post-registration nurses and midwives and is provided as a part-time taught course. The module is still being piloted; an evaluation and comparison of its use on both programmes will be undertaken when students have completed it. Twenty-five MEd students are currently working on the module which includes a consideration of some of the theoretical background to, and ethical issues associated with, reflective practice, as well as written guidelines to assist reflection on 'practitioner incidents'. Each student is encouraged to write up four such incidents (over a period of about fifteen months) and, in a final written overview, to reflect on what the key learning points have been.

Rhetoric and reality

These details have been included partly to provide a context for what follows but also because, like those in course brochures and annual reports, they convey a sense of 'cut and driedness' that stands in stark contrast to the felt reality of making the module 'happen'. As Usher and Bryant (1989:193) have said in relation to research 'the hunches, assumptions, false starts, informal theories and inner reflections' of the practitioners involved become disguised and sanitised in the presentation, in this case, of the 'facts' of academic content, credit values and so on. Bryant (1993:111) has subsequently noted the absence in academic literature of 'extended conversations ... between adult educators on the subject of each other's (reflective) practice'.

This paper does not plug that gap, but it does derive from several such conversations between the four authors who are all acting as personal tutors to MEd students working with the RP module. Our title is drawn from an image we have created to try to describe what happens when we meet. Each of us represents an individual 'tumbleweed' of experiences and ideas; in the 'dance' of our conversation, we are able both to do some personal untangling of our weeds and, jointly, to re-entangle certain threads to create different patterns.

We have no illusions that these patterns represent great truths, or even new insights. Indeed, not surprisingly since it seems to be in the nature of the reflective process (and is a key issue to which we shall return), much of what we have struggled to articulate we have subsequently found reference to elsewhere. We continue with the struggle for two reasons. First, to try to do ourselves what we are simultaneously asking of our students. Second, to attempt to clarify our own personal understandings of what is required of us in our professional role as personal tutors to post-graduate students who are also experienced educators - and who grapple in their working lives with problems and issues that mirror our own.

We felt great empathy with one student who remarked that the helter-skelter nature of her job and the constant demands it made on her to 'do, invent, create, get on' left little time for a breathing space or for consolidation, never mind reflection. We had had barely six months to work on this particular module from its 'invention' to delivery.

For the MEd, in particular, part of the rationale for the module was to make explicit, and give appropriate 'academic weighting' to, the process of personal and professional reflection which had always been implicit in the stipulation that assignments should, wherever possible, strike a balance between 'theory' and observations derived from students' own practice. The written materials (six units in distance learning format) were a product of the professional expertise and

experience of the tutors involved in both the MEd and the MMedSci. Nevertheless, and ironic in view of the module's content, reflective time - even to consider whether the introduction of this module really was such a good idea as it had at first appeared - was virtually non-existent until the course was actually up and running

Ground-rules and expectations

At that time the four of us who were to act as personal tutors on the MEd met for our first real discussion. None of us had worked closely together before although we felt we had some understanding of each other's interests and values. We agreed the 'ground-rules' both of our engagement with our respective tutor groups and of our own future meetings. The purpose of our meetings was to be two-fold: to raise any problems we might encounter in providing support to students engaged in reflective practice; and to record our deliberations on our own practice for possible 'research' purposes. The learning and developmental needs of the students were to be paramount: if the research element appeared to be getting in the way of our working with them then it would be jettisoned. Before our next meeting we would tell the students what we were intending to do.

The students, naturally, came with their own concerns. A key one was typified by the question 'By what right am I on this course?'. There were several subtexts to this. One, expressed by a number of women, concerned home and family commitments and 'guilt' at taking additional time away from these to study in order to progress personal/professional interests. A second was linked to the issue of the 'helter skelter' nature of people's jobs and the 'self-indulgence' of making time to study when there were so many other things to do. The perceived split between 'doing' and 'thinking' and the respective merits of these activities formed a third subtext in which we could identify many parallels in debates about teaching versus research in the context of university-based adult education.

Several students were hopeful that the RP module would help to resolve such concerns because it expressly 'gave permission' to them to 'stop and look' at whatever might be getting in the way of their effective performance as learners and teachers. For us, because the themes were ones we had also personally encountered, they raised the question of what we, in our role as shapers of an academic programme validated by a university, have specifically to offer to these students which they cannot obtain in their own working environment. We did not, however, frame the question that neatly until a lot of tumbleweed had got unravelled.

Ideas and experience

Our first key issue was 'What should we be reflecting on?'. We debated whether it should be our experiences of parallels with students' reflections or items to do with their needs as a student group; whether we wanted to know more about the student group itself or about what 'being' a reflective practitioner means in practice; and whether the role of a supervisor in counselling training had anything to offer us.

There are three aspects to this role: formative (in respect of the trainee's learning and development); normative (in relation to the quality of reflection); and restorative (in the sense of keeping the trainee 'going' and 'being there' in a supportive way). We wondered (but did not resolve) which aspects might have most relevance for us as tutors and as a 'reflective group'. The latter question raised two others: is it actually possible to reflect as a group when we each have different backgrounds and expectations?; and is taking part in a reflective group the same as 'doing' reflective practice?

The blandness of those written words conveys nothing of the tension and frustration that mounted in the room as ideas were thrown in, half explored, ignored or overtaken. As we left, someone muttered 'We've been here all morning - but what have we done?' The reply was 'In Tuckman's terms, we've probably been 'forming, storming and norming' all at once. With luck, at the next meeting we might start performing!'. It cheered us up - we hadn't been simply confused, we could name and describe what we had 'really' been doing.

These latter observations might seem trivial but they highlight two things that we have already mentioned and need to keep in mind: first, the culture in which we currently operate increasingly demands 'results' - evidence of something having been 'done'; second, there is a stark difference between knowing the theory - of group dynamics, reflective practice or whatever the subject may be - and experiencing the reality of it.

Is the essence of reflective practice the attempt to articulate that reality in the light of such theory as is known to us at that time? If so, is the role of the tutor on an academic programme primarily to help to broaden the fields of theory already 'known to' students in ways which will help them to articulate and better understand the felt reality of aspects of their practice? The questions in that form have, incidentally, just arisen out of this writing which is itself taking place after two further tutor meetings.

The first of these was complicated by the possibility of submitting a paper to the SCUTREA conference. The debate ranged from 'Is it possible to write a joint paper?' through 'Have we got enough/ anything to write about?' to 'What are we doing

here and why should we want to write a paper?/ Why would anyone want to read it?'. ('Debate' again implies an order in the various agendas and personal concerns which surfaced in our conversation but which were not fully evident until they were re-viewed on paper.) We kept skirting around an issue that seems to emerge repeatedly in various guises but which is to do with the relative merits of, and relationship between, the two different activities of 'practice' and 'research' (or, as the students had said, 'doing the job' and 'thinking about it').

Naming the weed

On this occasion it emerged in the formulation of our tumbleweed analogy. We could all relate to the image of rolling along our respective pathways enmeshed in our own mess of ideas and experiences, and of sometimes meeting up with others with whom we temporarily became entangled. Reflection was seen as an opportunity deliberately to stop tumbling and to seek direction and/or company on our journey. This, in turn, could enable us to know more about ourselves by allowing us to 'name' and re-examine our ideas/ experiences in the terms used by others. In an academic context this naming and re-examination would extend beyond the bounds of personal contact to 'researching the literature'.

However, this begs the question of whether the meaning/interpretation applied to an experience has greater validity if it can be shown to have other 'names' which other people have already agreed upon. (Brookfield [1993:77] touches on the problem when he asks, 'Whose voices are heard in a piece of academic writing?'.) For one of us this notion of 'external validation' sits very uncomfortably with a firmly-held belief that people should be encouraged to value their own experiences, and interpretations of them, and should not be made to feel these are better or worse by virtue of their similarity to something else. For another, whose background is in the natural sciences, the concept of 'validating' an experience, or, rather, the personal understanding of the experience, against those of other people is crucial. At the time of writing we have not yet resolved this issue but it has made us sensitive to the differences in our own backgrounds and the impact of these on the requirements we make of students. We sense, too, that reflective practice undertaken on an individual basis may merely reinforce habits and prejudices: working in a reflective group may provide greater potential for learning and change. It is time-consuming and to engage in it means other things may not get 'done'. Nevertheless, to agree to take such time and the opportunity this work provides to simply 'stop and look' at our 'mind-weeds' - the theories-in-use that have given shape to our own teaching and learning - seems increasingly necessary in a world where pressure to 'do, invent, create, get on' is mounting. Perhaps the most useful thing we can do as tutors of students who are also fellow educators is to enable them to do the same.

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Teaching, learning and NVQs: challenging behaviourism and competence in adult education theory and practice

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Introduction

The expanding influence of competence-based education and training (CBET) through the work of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) now extends to all levels of the system, from schooling (Hyland, 1991) to adult, further and higher education (Hyland, 1993a). CBET strategies are, however, seriously flawed and ill-equipped to deal with education and training beyond the level of basic skills and, moreover, are largely irrelevant to teaching and learning in adult education contexts.

CBET and Adult Education

The NCVQ enterprise has impinged on the work of adult educators in two main ways. Courses taught by adult educators have had to be altered to take account of NCVQ criteria (Ecclestone, 1993) - a policy enforced through the Department for Education commitment to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) expressed in Schedule 2 funding. In addition, education and training courses for adult educators have been changed to meet the requirements of the Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) as part of a process of subjecting the whole of the teaching profession to CBET standards (Hyland, 1992, DFE, 1993).

Describing the application of CBET approaches to adult and continuing education as an example of the 'narrow technicist approach to education which defines useful knowledge in the light of bureaucratic and corporate needs', Collins (1991) has urged adult educators to mount a vigorous 'resistance to this destructive approach to education and training' (p.45). In taking on Collins' project, it is necessary to demonstrate clearly and fully the inadequacies of the CBET approach which underpins NVQs before outlining alternative models for adult education theory and practice.

CBET: A Critique

The NCVQ strategy is based upon the 'outcome and product oriented' (Norris,1991,p.332) behaviourist versions of CBET which involve the reduction of learning to statements of competence derived from a functional analysis of occupational roles. This process involves 'breaking the work role for a particular area into purposes and functions' (Mitchell,1989,p.58), and the assessment of competence by means of 'performance criteria' which are 'determined or endorsed by a lead body' (NCVQ,1991,p.1).

The limitations and weaknesses of behaviourist learning strategies are well established (Dearden, 1984; Tennant asserts categorically that behaviourism is 'incompatible with the ethos of adult education' 1988 p.120). There is a tendency for such strategies to stifle creative learning, gloss over individual learning styles and undervalue the process of learning by encouraging a 'teaching to the test' mentality. Bull (1985) has questioned the 'moral validity' (p.79) of using such systems in educational contexts, and Marshall (1991) has argued that the 'functionalist and behavioural background' of the NCVQ philosophy has 'guaranteed that the model eventually produced is one-dimensional and prescriptive'. He suggests that 'even the most radical behavioural psychologist would not now subscribe to the traditional view of learning so evident in the work of the NCVQ' (pp.61-2).

In addition to this attachment to largely discredited learning foundations, there is considerable equivocation and confusion about what the key concept of 'competence' actually means (Ashworth & Saxton, 1990), and this has resulted in a 'plethora of opinions about competence and its definition' (Haffenden & Brown, 1989, p.139).

The epistemological foundation of NVQs is as shaky as its psychological base (Hyland, 1993b, 1994), and there is still some uncertainty about whether competence really is, as originally conceived, about 'what people can do rather than what they know' (UDACE,1989,p.6).

There have been changes in assessment procedures and a 'recontextualising' (Wolf, 1990, pp.35ff) of competence in order to answer charges that NVQs are 'too occupationally specific' and 'provide no basis on which workers could transfer the competences that they develop to different occupational sectors' (Raggatt, 1991, p.78). Trades union attitudes to NVQs are lukewarm and ambivalent (Field, 1991) and employers, who are supposed to be the key players in the system, are either ignorant about or indifferent to the NVQ system (Nash, 1993). On top of all this, a number of recent studies have reported that - through their minimalist narrowing of focus, de-skilling of roles and omission of significant theoretical content - NVQs are even failing to deliver the goods in the area of work-based VET for which they were designed (Callender, 1992, Raggatt, 1994). The recent survey

of NVQs by Smithers (1993) concluded that the NCVQ approach was leading us towards a 'disaster of epic proportions' (Preface).

CBET and Adult Learning

It needs to be emphasised that, notwithstanding their recently expanded role in the system, NVQs were originally designed to facilitate the work-based accreditation of occupational skills and for *no other purpose*. Consequently, the critical studies which indicate that they are not even successful in this limited domain should cause us to be extremely wary about extending the influence of CBET beyond this original remit. Furthermore, as far as the theory and practice of adult education are concerned, there is a clear mismatch between the behaviourism of CBET and the cognitive/experiential approaches favoured by adult educators (Mezirow, 1990, Kolb,1993). Instead of an experiential holistic approach, CBET atomises and fragments learning into assessable chunks, rather than valuing process and experience, CBET is concerned only with performance outcomes, and most significantly, instead of fostering critical reflection and alternative perspectives, CBET offers a mono-cultural view based on the satisfaction of restricted performance criteria directed towards fixed and pre-determined ends.

It is just these features of CBET which cause commentators such as Hodkinson (1992), for instance, to suggest alternatives to the 'behaviouristic NCVQ model of competence' in the form of models which 'focus on beliefs and how we think, as well as on performance' and which view the teaching/learning process as 'central in the development of intelligent practice' (pp.34-5). Certainly such alternatives are needed in the area of the professional education and development of adult educators for there is a genuine danger that, in reducing professional knowledge and skill to simplistic competence statements, professionalism and the theory and practice of adult education will be proletarianised and de-skilled (Chown & Last, 1993).

Adult Education and Models of Professionalism

In questioning the suitability of the NCVQ model for teacher education, Eraut (1989) expressed the concern that, once trained, people might 'consider their competence as sufficient and ignore the need for further improvement' (p. 181). What is required for professional education programmes is a model which does justice to the ethical dimension and knowledge base of practice - what Usher (1989) has called a 'reflexive awareness of practice' (p. 90) - and allows for ongoing and progressive development. Recent work in the areas of nursing (Benner, 1982), social care (Winter, 1992) and teacher education (Elliott, 1993) has provided viable alternatives in the form of models which manage to satisfy 'outcomes' criteria yet still do justice to the qualities of the 'reflective practitioner' (Schon, 1987) and the concept of professional expertise.

The NCVQ approach to education and training is in line with what Elliott calls the 'social market' model by which

> 'the outcomes of professional learning are construed as quantifiable products which can be clearly pre- specified in tangible and concrete form. Learning outcomes are conceived as behavioural, with an emphasis placed on the atomistic specification of discrete practical skills (competences)' (ibid; p.17)

Against this, Elliott recommends the 'hermeneutic' model based on the idea of education as a 'practical science' in which professionals draw on 'repertoires of experienced cases which are stored in a practitioner's long term memory and represent his or her stock of situational understandings' (ibid; p.67). This approach is inspired by the reflective practitioner tradition based on Schon's work, and also connects well with the Dreyfus model of professional development favoured by Elliott, Benner and Eraut (op.cit.) which consists of a five-stage description of skill acquisition: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert (pp.181-2).

The concept of expertise deriving from this strategy seems well suited to the work of adult education practitioners. Tennant (1991) - who defines expertise in terms of the 'knowledge and skill gained through sustained practice and experience' (p.50) - has explored its relevance in this sphere, and there is now a body of empirical work dealing with studies in a wide range of occupational fields. Summarising a range of such studies, Chi, Glaser & Farr (1988) noted that experts had substantial domain-specific knowledge, perceived meaningful patterns in their professional activity and had strong self-monitoring skills. All these qualities match well with the 'practical science' model and seem particularly applicable to the 'transformative pedagogy' aspects of adult education outlined by Collins (op.cit; pp.101ff).

Conclusion

The mechanistic and behaviourist nature of CBET is at odds with the work of adult education practitioners and with the requirements of professional development in the field. It is perfectly proper for adult educators to be interested in the 'outcomes' of programmes as well as the learning processes, knowledge and values constitutive of their fields of interest - so long as the outcomes in question do not overly pre-determine content and methodology or foreclose learning options. Unfortunately, there is considerable evidence that CBET strategies simply *do* restrict and prescribe practice in just this way.

The NCVQ approach is concerned first and foremost with the generation and collection of *evidence* to satisfy competence criteria and, although this can be a useful activity, it needs to be distinguished sharply from the activity of *learning* which is the paramount concern of adult educators. Adult education programmes need to maintain a primary focus on learning *per se* rather than as evidence collected to meet competence requirements.

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Research and practice: a romantic relationship?

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This conference has declared its interest in raising questions about who our students are now that we have reached the end of a period of rapid expansion. The expansion (widening?) of adult participation in education also prompts questions about how and if the curriculum should change if we discover that new clients bring with them new experiences, values and interests. This paper explores these issues by examining the development of a literature curriculum which is grounded in the students' own reading habits - specifically popular romantic fiction. The development can be seen in the light of Freire's writings about cultural invasion. Romantic fiction, with its huge and diverse female readership could be perceived as an example of cultural conquest in gendered terms, a mechanism whereby a largely female readership imbibes a value system which is in the interests of men (Fowler, 1991; Jensen, 1984) It can conversely be read as an authentically female culture in a folkloric sense, written by women, for women and shared amongst them with affection as Janice Radway begins to suggest in 'Reading is not Eating' (1986). Whatever the conclusion, the study by women of writing which has such powerful resonances for women has to result in an engagement with ideologies of romance and their implications for our lives.

An account of this curriculum and its development unavoidably incorporates a second discussion of change: a consideration of how researching one's own teaching changes the teaching itself. In addition to developing and teaching a curriculum based around romantic fiction I have begun to use this class as the focus for part of my work as a research student at Leeds University. There are many problems associated with this dual role, but I have found that the research itself has become a catalyst for change. The research is microscopic in its focus, examining the minutiae of the students' experiences. Consequently it is closely bound up with the day to day process of teaching and classroom interaction.

I am working with a group of women who are studying on an Access to HE course. The idea that the Access curriculum should grow out of the experience of Access students has been fundamental to Access developments from the beginning, although the principle has always been controversial (Holdsworth). My colleagues and I thought we had designed our Access programmes in ways which would draw on the experiences and speak to the concerns of our students. Specifically, the literature sessions for the Access for Women course, as has become a standard of good practice for such work always emphasised women writers exploring women's experiences. (See Milloy and O'Rourke, 1991; for example) I had begun to notice, however, that many of my students were ashamed of their personal reading habits should these happen to include, as they frequently did, popular romantic fiction. This seemed to mean that I was engaged in a process, in collusion with them, of invalidating reading which gave them pleasure, and of seeming to allow access to other literature only on terms which created disjuncture with previous reading. This applied as much to introducing work by women writers and feminist writers as it did to the study of work from established male writers. Indeed, in some ways contemporary feminist writers were perceived as more alien and more intellectual than familiar male writers from a classical tradition.

I needed to find a way to change the curriculum to take more account of what a succession of groups of students had been saying about what they liked to read, to acknowledge the value of their tastes and to perceive these as worthy of exploration. This was about more than just changing the booklist. Romantic novels would not be legitimised by inclusion within the syllabus if they were included only as objects of ridicule. The idea that they might be of merit, and of value to women had to be seen as an acceptable point of view.

In 1984, in the conclusion of her ethnographic study of women romance readers in which she noted that romance reading can be construed as both a conservative and an oppositional act, Janice Radway commented:

> 'Because the oppositional act is carried out through the auspices of a book and thus involves the fundamentally private, isolating experience of reading , these women never get together to share either the experience of imaginative opposition or perhaps more important, the discontent that gave rise to their need for the romance in the first place.' (1984; p. 212)

Whether the romance is read as an empowering revenge story (Cohn, 1988), as a comfort blanket (Cawelti, 1976) or as demeaning and pornographic portrayal of women (Assiter, 1988; Douglas, 1980; Snitow, 1979) its all pervasiveness makes it worth making space for its readers to share and discuss the experience of reading. Radway (1984) also speculated about what the effect would be of an encounter between romance readers and feminists. I have tried to create the opportunity for such discussions and such encounters. The students encounter feminist readings of the romance and also bring with them as critics their own feminisms and the approaches they have learned in other sessions such as social science or women's studies.

It has been important also to acknowledge that women students do not all have the same relationship to romantic fiction: class, race, sexuality, age and personal experience all impinge upon how an individual woman is situated with regard to romantic ideologies. The groupwork, and the materials used and shared, try to make these differences explicit leading to a wider understanding of the ways in which these ideologies can operate. Nor was there ever the intention to confine the curriculum to popular romantic fiction and imply that all women read romantic fiction and that this should be all that we study. Instead we began with an exploration of popular romances and moved on to consider other works, using romance as a theme and the romances as a point of reference.

The students and I also engaged in writing - stories about what happens after the happily ever after wedding which concludes the Mills and Boon novel, romantic fiction with role reversal, romantic fiction translated from its characteristically exotic settings to the vicissitudes of a northern council estate. This seems important if the romance is seen to reinforce patriarchal values; it gave us all the opportunity to reclaim it and remake it and as such was often an empowering experience. Some of the stories the women wrote were violent, witty, venomous, relishing power reversal and the reification of the hero. The degree of laughter present in the room suggested a considerable release of tension. I speculated that the release had at least two sources: a confessional element and a delight in revenge.

The confessional came from admitting to reading certain kinds of books and discovering that we were not alone or ostracised by our fellows. The pleasures of revenge were achieved through the subversion of a narrative form which can be read as demeaning to women. What seemed to emerge from this process was a sharper understanding of the rules and values implicit in conventional romantic fiction. The women's stories were funny because they broke the rules and defied the values, and their understanding of both of these crystallised as a result.

As the work developed and I used romantic fiction with successive groups of women, refining the approach in various ways, I began to understand that this process was not merely about avoiding the kinds of alienation from the curriculum which had concerned me initially, but that engaging with these texts appeared to produce students who were operating with a high level of critical thinking skills. This fitted with the literature on critical thinking which suggests that individuals are better able to cope with new and potentially threatening concepts if they have experienced a degree of self reflection, challenging their own beliefs and values (Brookfield, 1986; Schon, 1986; Mezirow, 1990) If this was the case then adjusting the curriculum to align it with the students own reading habits was going to enable them to cope more effectively with HE, where, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, they were going to encounter the kinds of ill structured problems (Kitchener and King, 1990) for which critical thinking skills are a key requirement.

What I lacked however was evidence about how this happened to support the contention that studying romantic fiction was a beneficial process. There were times when I needed to defend my position, and it also seemed pertinent, in the light of debates about curricular issues such as the place of cultural studies, the nature of the English curriculum, the need for thematically as opposed to discipline based approaches to Access work, to try to come to a better understanding of how these changes in thinking were taking place.

I needed to find research methods which would enable me to identify changes in the students' thinking processes and to explore the relationship between these and their study of the romance. This meant that I needed to find a way of researching with my own students which would enable me to access their own accounts of their experiences during the year. I also needed to acknowledge my involvement with them and with the curriculum itself. Clearly I would be too heavily engaged in both respects to contemplate using an objective, scientific research model. Instead the research is located within a broadly phenomenological and interpretive tradition, and involves the collection of stories from the students, myself and co-teachers.

I have not been able to separate the teaching and researching roles. I am collecting data through individual and group interviews, through observation and through an examination of students' learning journals. The research is proving to be an essentially constructive process, creating knowledge rather than recording pre-existing

phenomena. It is this creative dimension which means that the research is also actively implicated in developing student learning; in promoting the critical thinking I am trying to record. In other words, if I was not engaged in the research, the process I am researching would not be so marked. The keeping of learning journals, for example, has not been a matter of neutral recording on the parts of the students. It has sharpened their focus on their work, provided the opportunity for them to clarify their ideas, to reflect on the classroom encounters they have experienced. Keeping a journal of romance reading and thinking about romance has become an important facet of the curriculum itself. They have used them to relate their college work to the outside world, so that they are reflecting on the influence of their study on their life and their lives on their studies. Some of the students have found this process difficult, but the majority have written enthusiastically, reflecting on their lives and their reading in the light of their studies in a manner which suggests that they are coming:

> 'to regard knowledge as relative and contextual to view the value frameworks and moral codes informing their behaviour as cultural constructs' (Brookfield, 1986; p. 47)

The process of being interviewed has created knowledge in similar ways. I have asked about reading, educational and romantic histories, and about the changes the students have experienced during the programme. Some of the questions provoked answers which had been rehearsed before - stories about romantic meetings, the struggle for education, marital breakdown and so on. Often, however, being interviewed made the student formulate an idea for the first time, or recast their understanding in the light of recent readings or conversations. In effect, although the curriculum had begun to provide the opportunity for re-evaluation, participating in the research consolidated this. An interpretive approach makes it possible to accommodate this reflexive relationship between research and practice; to acknowledge that

> 'the researcher is not simply trying impartially to discover the facts but to transform and improve a situation and thus in a very real sense is creating the facts.' (Usher and Bryant, 1989; p.127)

I had to recognise that what I was doing was working within a story telling tradition (Gergen) and that the data were really a series of creative accounts serving different purposes. As a researcher I am collecting these accounts, stimulating them sometimes, occasionally featuring in them, then using these fictions to create my own. As Denzin argues:

> 'Writers of interpretation must free themselves from the erroneous preconception that they do not write mythical fictions.' (1989; p.37)

The research is far from complete, but the data already suggest three ways in which the opportunity to explore these texts may be implicated in changing thinking habits: firstly it would appear to enhance the students' awareness of their own expectations about what a work of fiction should be.

They pointed to the bland representational style and structure of the romances as indicative of 'a proper story' ; thus the romances came to operate as a foil for other ways of writing and a familiar base from which to explore somewhat wilder fictional realms.

Secondly students were able to contextualise past and current experiences which had before been perceived as separate, private and individual. One student commented that the Mills and Boon novels we were studying were 'a bit close to the grain really ...I really felt reading Mills and Boon that this was my husband that we were reading about'. She went on to explain how the whole progress of her courtship and marriage followed the plot of a romantic novel, with disastrous consequences, and was able to analyse this in terms of the inequalities of power within the romantic paradigm: she had not thought about the relationship in this way before.

Finally, the consideration of the ideology of romance appears to alter conceptions of the wider world - behaviour which had been perceived as natural and inevitable comes to be regarded as constructed. Students reported on their sudden awareness of the all pervasiveness of particular plots, themes, values and beliefs in the entertainment they enjoyed and even in the lives they observed people living and in which they shared.

Beginning where the students are may be a cliché, but it would appear that making students own cultural habits the central focus of the curriculum does have transformative properties and that a curriculum committed to promoting change must adjust itself to changes in the composition of its students.

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Vision to viability, marginal to mainstream, Freire to Foucault

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I first began to identify myself as an 'adult educator' in 1977. Then, my primary reference points and inspirations were Tom Lovett and Paulo Freire, educators with a vision of a more equal society and a praxis based on a face-to-face educational engagement with local communities. In my first full-time job as an adult educator, I set out to be a networker, an animateur, an educational action-researcher who tried to engage a variety of working-class adults in some kind of educational and developmental dialogue and action. What appeared to matter then to myself and my adult educator colleagues were values, vision and a sense of personal identity/integrity; and 'success' was judged on the quantity, quality *and* social purpose of the initiatives developed.

In 1985, after serving a suitable apprenticeship in LEA community adult education, I became a university adult educator, initially working as a full-time researcher on a Replan project. The institutional context of Higher Education was a little different from my previous experience but the overall aims and purposes were ones I knew and felt comfortable with: action-research, engagement in the 'real world' on a critical social, economic and political issue and face-to-face engagement with unemployed and unwaged adults. Now 17 years after becoming an adult educator and 9 since I began to work in a university, the overall ideological and policy climate has changed dramatically with the effect that a semi-detached, semi-autonomous 'adult education' is rapidly being replaced by a more all-embracing, more mainstream 'adult learning'; I now work for a university seeking to be research-driven where, notwithstanding the 'community' and 'equal opportunities' rhetoric of mission statements, the important reference points are more than ever institutional and financial rather than local and social. In this new world, most of my university adult education colleagues, either through the vexed promise of accreditation, or through joining the research selectivity rat-race appear to be looking forward to becoming (at last!) 'proper' academics.

Amongst all this rather frantic and pressured Higher Education 'mainstreaming' I continue to see myself as an adult educator. Unusually and unfashionably, I still have a brief to counter educational disadvantage. But my scope for action and development outside the university world has been continually reduced over the last years by tightening budgetary and managerial considerations and the planning blight of accreditation. Vision and values appear to count for little unless linked to multiple FTEs or significant publications; and the new inspirations and reference points for colleagues are on the one hand, Foucault and Derrida, and on the other, Funding Councils, Research Ratings and TECS.

While some of the changes outlined above clearly reflect my own development through different educational sectors, they also point to significant differences in the context and culture of adult education and the practices and identities of adult educators. While I regret many of the recent changes in the world of adult education, my aim in this paper is not to look back fondly, nostalgically and selectively to 'better times' but to trace and review critically some of the fundamental changes that have affected myself and other adult educators. What has been gained and what lost, and where are we going?

Values and Purposes Reviewed

With the predominance and pervasiveness of New Right thinking and the ascendancy of the Thatcher/Major governments times have clearly changed. In terms of adult education, we have moved on from the 70s and early 80s' heyday of a broad liberal/radical tradition, where, notwithstanding considerable internal ideological differences, there was a common concern with economic and social inequality, an assertion of social purpose and a rationale for an interventionist adult education approach outside the formal education system.

In these New Times, adult educators need to take stock. Certainly many university adult educator critics of the liberal/radical tradition have welcomed the chance this affords to review the changing situation, re-theorise adult education and point to the deficiencies of the liberal/radical tradition: that it was monolithic and oppressive; under-theorised and too practice-derived; class-reductionist; saturated in an individualistic humanistic discourse; that there was a vast gap between liberal/radical rhetoric and patriarchal practice; that it was over-optimistic, even self-serving, in its reading of the relationship between education and social change.

I understand and can identify to a lesser or greater extent with all of these criticisms. However, an acknowledgement of shortcomings and datedness need not also involve, in these times of 'possessive individualism', an abandonment of accompanying values and purposes which many would see as universal and timeless. Perhaps something can and should be salvaged from the liberal/radical tradition? In this context, it is interesting to reflect on a recent

inter-change in 'Adults Learning' between Jane Thompson and Malcolm Barry. It demonstrates just how much times have changed when Jane Thompson, one of the arch-critics of the liberal tradition in the early 80s, is able, albeit in retrospect and in parentheses, to refer to the 'good old days' of the liberal tradition when'....there was sufficient space around the edges .to keep alive the visions and ideals of independent working-class education inherited from labour movements and working-class feminists' (Thompson, 1993).

In her short article on 'Learning, Liberation and Maturity,' Jane re-asserts ideas of 'really useful knowledge', praxis, conscientisation and critical intelligence'; laments a changing political and ideological context where 'the language of liberalism and radicalism (has been) re-appropriated into the vocabulary of the re-invigorated right'; and lambastes a new orthodoxy where '..it has become socially and intellectually unsound to speak in essentialist and universal terms about common experiences of oppression.' In agreeing with this re-assertion of values and purposes, I even begin to wonder, whether, having been, I suppose, a 'reformist' in the 70s and early 80s, I have now become a radical or indeed a re-actionary? However, like Jane I think, I have some difficulty translating these values and purposes into action in the present ideological and funding context of adult higher education. I wonder if there is anything also to be learned from Malcolm Barry's rejoinder to Jane concerning 'Learning, Humility and Honesty'? (Barry, 1993)

While I don't particularly want to revisit some of the earlier schisms of Left politics (and I think Malcolm locates Jane's arguments too much in these terms), my experience as a community adult educator accords with some of his points. Maybe adult educators did spend too much time 'writing solely to each other' and identifying, sometimes bitter, demarcations between reformists and radicals; and so didn't pay enough attention to the agendas and concerns of the adults we worked with. While we needed to have a vision of a fairer more equal society, perhaps we might have spent more time checking out in greater detail how our vision and way forward accorded with that of the adults we worked with. The classic illustration of this is perhaps that of unemployment when we soon learned that we would ignore the immediate economic and instrumental agendas of unwaged adults at our cost. Certainly, Malcolm Barry is right that New Times, if nothing else, has forced adult educators to be more honest and humble in the claims we make for our pedagogy and more circumspect in exploring the art of the possible.

The Art of the Possible - lessons from Replan?

The 1980s adult education engagement with the problem of unemployment provides an interesting and instructive lesson for adult educators on the art of the possible in these New Times. Of course, social purpose adult educators were not new to the problem of unemployment, but a major sectoral engagement with a national programme funded by a Conservative government was some kind of departure and raised a number of issues of policy and strategy.

A (necessarily very brief) overview of different phases of the Replan programme perhaps illustrates the story of adult education in the 80s and throws up a number of crucial issues for adult educators.

Phase 0: take the (recycled and tainted?) money or not?

the ultimate decision reflects the pragmatism of the liberal tradition allied to its broader reformist social purpose of engaging with and influencing government policy on a fundamental socio-economic and human problem.

Phase 1: dispersed action-research projects (working on the margins)

the decentralised, localised, inter-agency approach and participatory and action-research emphasis reflect a brave, more radical approach and philosophy, just as the initial allocation of project funding also highlights the ability of the liberal adult education establishment to get first call on funding. However the longer-term effects of this approach appear to have been significant both in helping to further disperse money to local communities in subsequent allocations and in moving away rapidly from an understanding that un-employment was predominantly a male problem.

Phase 2: focus on policy development in institutional settings (influencing the mainstream)

this phase reflects the growing influence of a new cadre of able, ambitious and largely female political operators and managers with perhaps less of a previous identity as 'adult educators'; a strong orientation towards 'realpolitik'; and a more centralised NIACE/Replan policy which concentrated on influencing mainstream educational (and employment) policy and practice.

Phase 3: people, learning and jobs

reflects a vain attempt to hang on to, liberalise and re-work the prevailing vocationalist agenda of a government increasingly confident in its approach to employment, unemployment and the role of education and training.

(based on personal obervations as a participant at various stages and levels of Replan, Field, 1989, Forrester and Ward, 1991)

A tentative judgement on the Replan programme is that its development and ultimate end-point are in many ways indicative of the fate of adult education in the late 80s and early 90s. On the positive side, it

involved a lot of new people in the process of adult education, as students, teachers and researchers; it succeeded in developing and disseminating diverse areas of good practice (e.g. in outreach, access, work with women and black communities) which have clearly informed and influenced a wide variety of further and higher education institutions; it helped to make sufficient links with and influence on government to ensure the survival of NIACE and thus a vital continuing national adult education profile and perspective.

Yet it also illustrates the limitations of educational influence in the face of a determined political agenda. The end of the Replan programme left us with future funding for unemployment training very clearly in the domain of social control, where, amidst an increasingly unequal society, the unemployed and unwaged have only a passive and dependent role and little prospect of empowerment, despite the various rhetorical claims; and with a proliferation of private training agencies operating in a new adult learning market-place that considerably restricts the influence of and space for social purpose educators. If Replan was a good illustration of the gains and losses for adult education in the 1980s through the art of the possible and a move from the margins to the mainstream, the key question is where do adults educators go from here?

New Inspirations, Reference Points and Identities?

As part of our stock-taking, we need to re-view our inspirations and reference points. In this context, and as university adult educators move inexorably towards becoming higher educators, we appear to be becoming increasingly influenced by the ideas of post-modernity. A post-modern perspective is certainly attractive and useful in the way it helps us to make some kind of sense of a rapidly-developing society with changing social norms and few certainties. And in terms of the earlier-identified criticisms of the liberal/radical tradition within a changing adult education discourse, I can see that it has helped adult educators to move away from the influence of grand narratives and over-simplistic polarities of position; to acknowledge more explicitly that 'the working-class has never been a single unitary subject but has been simultaneously fractured by skill, gender, ethnicity, region and the cultures engendered by these divisions' (Westwood, 1992, 234); to recognise and analyse further the power of language in our own and other discourses; to take on board the politics of identity and difference in trying to re-conceptualise and sophisticate our view of community and our approach to communities; to identify the liberatory potential of New Social Movements.

A post-modern perspective therefore helps us to gain insight into our current, marketised and complex world, but it also raises for me a number of crucial questions about our vision, our praxis, our identities as adult educators and our possible collaborators. Sallie Westwood writes that:

> 'Far from generating a radical vision, critics suggest that post-modern politics ..is de-radicalising and domesticating; that, rather than providing an alternative to the right, it answers them in their own language'. (1992, 245)

It is this apparent lack of vision that concerns me, especially when a post-modern perspective is set alongside the very clear vision of the New Right, as reflected, for example, in a rapidly-changing Higher Education policy context. I think it was Marx (Groucho?) who prophesied that 'if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything'. With this in mind, I can't help observing that, in our own world of university adult education, while we talk 'subjectivity', 'diversity' and 'situatedness', we are still required to jump uniformly and slavishly through the hoops of a research selectivity exercise which drives us further apart from our students and an accreditation process which reduces all students to economic units, regardless of their background and income.

I recognise only too well the need for survival strategies in adversity, but nevertheless still need to have a vision that extends beyond multiple FTEs and high research gradings, and a way forward in developing our praxis. In addressing this question, Sallie Westwood identifies a certain resonance between a Freirian and Foucauldian perspective in that they both acknowledge the micro-politics of social life and the diffuse nature of power. (Westwood, 1992, 245) However, one of the fundamental differences between them is that of vision. While I don't want to be too ready to embrace the worst self-deceptions of the liberal/radical tradition, my reasons for being an adult educator are still tied up to trying to change the world, if even in a very minor and modest way. And I believe it needs to be changed more than ever! A Freirian-inspired praxis, 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire, 1972) may beg a number of questions about, for example, whose vision, whose consciousness, how to link vision to action, but at its best, it does allow for dialogue with unequal groups, an acknowledgement and exploration of 'limit situations' and some kind of way forward through educational engagement.

While all university adult educators, I would imagine, would continue to maintain the essential complementarity between theory and practice, and 'reject the institutional distinction between practitioner and academic' (Edwards, 1993) there is a danger that under the dual influences of post-modern discourse and academic performance indicators, our praxis becomes more theory-driven and its locus more

institutional, that university adult educators will become mainly and merely higher educators and the link between university theory and non-university practice becomes weaker. Thus we will move further away from any idea that theorising about adult education should be grounded in an understanding of practice and how adult educators think about their practice (Usher and Bryant, 1989).

My last fear is that, as our praxis becomes more institutionalised, this will also have implications for who we talk to and who we work with. As we move on from the moral highground of the liberal/radical tradition to the intellectual highground of post-modernity, I am concerned that our discourse becomes more impenetrable and less accessible and thus our audience more selective. Even more than in the liberal/radical tradition of the 70s, we may end up talking only to ourselves.... or to other academics. Put starkly, the question is whether trickle-down post-modernism will be any more liberatory than trickle-down economics?

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Researching change - the FHE Act and research in the education of adults

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This paper has been written as the direct result of personal experience gained in the course of conducting research into the implications of the FHE Act on the former- LEA adult education work in an inner-city area of a northern city. The LEA's Schedule 2 work had been transferred to incorporated colleges and the non-Schedule 2 work is maintained via a separate structure. I encountered a number of factors in the course of the study which I thought worthy of further consideration. Although in some ways the area I selected is administratively atypical, I have been drawn to conclude that many of the features I have encountered are illustrative of the situation in general. Research centred on the practical and philosophical impact of the FHE Act on adult education in one particular locality may throw light on broad trends, despite the inevitable intrusion of parochial issues. The research included a series of interviews with key personnel, all of whom had spent many years working in adult education. As my work progressed, it became apparent to me that, together with the broader changes contributing to the quiet demise of adult education as we know it, the changes engendered by the FHE Act posed a challenge not just for my study but for ongoing research in general. The Act may be seen as the legislation which marked the end of the possibility of establishing social purpose, needs-based education for adults and marked a return to essentially demand-led provision. Unless other researchers respond by avoiding the subject, rather as the wise might seek to avoid an area during an earthquake and wait for the aftershocks to stop before returning, my experience will not be unique. Moreover, unless we do record and document, we may lose the information and evidence for later analysis and reflection.

An initial source of difficulty in conducting research during a time of change, obvious though it may appear, is the unpredictability of circumstance. It is increasingly difficult to rely on any constants. Parameters shift. Factors previously established as given are taken away. Future policy trends are a popular area of study but may be undermined by rapid movement. This is clearly far from ideal for those actually doing the work as rocks turn to sand under their feet. It is inconvenient, at the very least, for the researcher. Is it appropriate to decide on an 'end' date when significant changes continue to occur? One does not expect the world to stop and wait for the completion of a piece of research before any more changes are made, but does not the increasing regularity of the changes undermine the actual work undertaken by practitioners? Furthermore, the aftershocks from the FHE Act earthquake can be of not inconsiderable force. To give an example: when I began my study, I encountered widespread concern that adult literacy, adult numeracy and ESOL were going to prove too financially costly to be viable, despite their inclusion in Schedule 2. This gave rise to some concern among people engaged in such work and this anxiety, scarcely surprisingly, permeated their perceptions of the future of their work in general. The FEFC subsequently gave 'weighting' to certain types of work, including adult literacy and ESOL, through the methods of calculating 'units of activity'. News of the change gradually filtered through to the staff, whose perceptions of circumstances were transformed: those I met before the change were engaged in work which appeared to be regarded as an economically unjustifiable drain on resources whereas those I met afterwards had seen their work move overnight to being looked upon as excellent value for money. This change not only affected their outlook on their work but also on the whole field of adult education. This, of course, also demonstrated the manner in which financial aspects of educational administration now affect the way the work is being perceived: the market place is victorious. Staff are even tending to see their own work in terms of narrowly defined financial criteria and, even if they have fundamental disagreements with the changes, their own outlooks have been permeated by this transformation in the value system. In *Adults Learning*, Jane Thompson referred to the new language of education in both print and debate, 'delivered with the kind of tenacity devoid of passion that characterises automatons released from business training schemes' (Thompson, 1993). Indeed, who has not encountered staff from the training and enterprise cult whose manner suggested the urgent need for deprogramming?

This shifting ethos from the traditional welfare model to marketplace (albeit a marketplace as defined by central government) - from 'value' as an

appraisal of merit to 'value' based on financial calculations - has created a further area of uncertainty for researchers. Many people working in education have little previous experience of undertaking work in a commercial setting. They may be uncomfortable with it. They may be philosophically opposed to it. Yet it cannot be possible to remain unerringly true to one's original principles when the evolution has been so lengthy and insidious. The move away from a welfare-centred, needs-based sector to a demand-led provision does not allow room for the sort of work which will not prove to be economically viable. Although I found evidence of a tendency to believe that it was possible to remain true to long-held principles and to work, as it were, 'under-cover', the pressures of the new value systems have rendered this virtually impossible in practice.

The effects of the new ethos include the emphasis put on the role of marketing departments, who are responsible for the preparation of the public face of education. Corporate images on glossy paper are replacing outreach workers and, where they are still employed, outreach workers are engaged merely in publicising existing courses: outreach has become synonymous with publicity and marketing. In some circumstances, the ideas of commercial rivalry and confidentiality have led to a preoccupation with secrecy. This preoccupation with quasi-commercial secrecy poses a problem for the researcher, unaccustomed to this particular manifestation of paranoia. It is disturbing to be assumed to be involved in some sort of educational espionage. Some staff insist on being 'off the record' - as if dealing with tabloid journalists rather than university researchers. In some establishments, staff have had to accept contracts which include severe restrictions on contacts with outside bodies, from the media and elected officials to university researchers.

The erection of new barriers to research has serious implications for anyone intending to attempt to address the profound imbalance in research which has given university-based work a disproportionate role in the publications concerning adult education. Methods of working with adults have been studied and the work undertaken by university extra-mural departments and the WEA has been well documented but the same cannot be said of the development of the community-based work of local authority workers and FE lecturers. It seems curious that the work of those institutions dealing with the largest numbers of adults has gone largely unrecorded in the public domain. Whether documenting and analysing innovative forms of provision, considering methods and functions or conducting action research, the work of FE colleges and local authorities has not attracted its fair share of academic attention. One result of this imbalance is the problem posed for staff from colleges and local authorities when they come to study for higher degrees and seek academically acceptable publications to validate their own experience, in order to avoid their written work being seen as based on anecdote alone. I started to study for a higher degree when I was a local authority continuing education worker. I was welcomed as a student but the sort of work my colleagues and I undertook was barely mentioned in the many books and articles. Since the vast bulk of the published work had been produced by university staff, it felt as though the invisibility of local authority adult education was symbolic of the level of esteem in which universities held the sort of work I had been involved in for a decade. The changing ethos is unlikely to do anything other than serve to accentuate this. It is important to research the changes the sector is undergoing, whatever the practical difficulties, in order to record the achievements of the past, to learn from the process of change and to begin to redress the imbalance.

The FHE Act, for many staff involved in post-16 education, represented their first experience of their work being changed by legislation. Whereas local decisions can be questioned or challenged, to fight legal changes from within an FEFC funded organisation is not an option. The only possible responses to legal changes are to carry them through or to resign. (Given current unemployment levels, this has to be a case of 'if you can't stand the heat - get out of the frying pan and into the fire'.) The research I did, therefore, involved people who had 'chosen' to continue in their jobs. Thus, when conducting the interviews, I was meeting with people who were, if only by the fact that they were still working in adult education, participating in the enactment of the legislation, whether actively or passively. Various issues arose in the course of conducting the interviews. There was a tendency to believe that the sort of changes staff were seeing - and enduring - were replicated throughout England and Wales. Generalisations were made on the assumption that organisational and administrative changes as profound as those they had seen had taken place on a national basis. Yet, as Bob Powell has shown (Powell, 1993), local responses to the FHE Act have varied greatly. Where FE colleges were already entirely responsible for the adult education provision, there have been fewer changes. Where local authorities have retained responsibility, changes have not necessarily been evident to students. Only where authorities have responded by a wholesale reorganisation, have changes been drastic.

In my encounters with people working in adult education, I found that they had virtually

memorised the list of Schedule 2 types of work, but broader knowledge concerning the FHE Act was less certain. With the exception of changes which were known to be the result of the implementation of the Children's Act (practical requirements for crèches for example), changes tended to be ascribed to the FHE Act. In point of fact, some changes had been implemented as a local response to the requirements of the FHE Act and some were entirely local/parochial in origin and had little or nothing to do with the FHE Act. For my research, changes falling into each of these categories were of significance. However, it was important to ascribe the origin of the change correctly. I found that where staff were asked about the impact the Act had had on their work, answers included a combination of the above. There was concern that the Act and its implications for their work had not been explained to, nor discussed with, them. This point is of significance throughout FHE: legislative changes are not necessarily fully - and accurately - understood by everyone. There are two areas of importance here; one of them concerns the local management of change but the second the fact that staff need to understand legislative developments relating to their line of work. Perhaps I am falling into the very trap I have described - of assuming one's own experience to be typical of everyone's.

The effects the FHE Act has had, and is having, on adult education form an essential area for research. There is a tendency to stand around wringing one's hands, but this will only result in the continued gap in published material. Without research, the changes which are affecting the work undertaken by local authorities and FE colleges will be evidenced only as hearsay. The marketplace may prefer research in the guise of public opinion surveys but this should not deter researchers from investigating the politically sensitive aspects. It is imperative to consider whether valuable work is being 'lost' because it is not eligible for funding from the FEFC, and whether this is resulting in the 'loss' of some of the students who, hitherto, were regarded as priority groups. It is vital to analyse the effects of the market place 'value' ethos on work which had been created due to its being of social 'value'.

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Changing working-class women's education: shifting ideologies

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This paper will argue that the reformulation of vocational education by the introduction of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) represents a direct attempt to control not only the delivery of education but also its ideological content. Analysis of the content of the GNVQ specifications reveals the nature of the epistemological shift being enforced by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ). This will adversely affect the education of working class people - particularly women - who represent the majority of students in FE Colleges and who have already been seriously disadvantaged by the education system because of its class, gender and race biased nature.

Present government policy emphasises the need to narrow the vocational/academic divide so as to address the perceived 'skills shortage' faced by British industry. This is part of the purpose of NCVQ. It is my belief that the differences between academic and vocational education are the direct result of social class - working class people's education is vocational training. Vocational training (or education) - as distinct from professional training such as medicine, law, accountancy - is only offered to those who are not expected to succeed academically and the class based nature of the education system means that this is mainly working class people. The vocational area chosen is usually dictated by gender.

There are three 'women's' areas within FE - hairdressing, secretarial studies and health and social care. My research concentrates on health and social care. Gender and class expectations lead many women onto courses to do with looking after people - currently these are usually BTEC National Diplomas and First Awards or City and Guilds courses (which are mostly part time courses for those in some kind of employment). There are significant numbers of mature students as well as 16 - 19 year old students on these courses; there is great local variation in student destinations but nationally half go on to higher education or some type of professional training (BTEC, 1994), locally this is often more. All existing full time vocational awards are to be replaced by GNVQs - in the case of health and social care the intermediate award has to be offered from September 1994 and the advanced award from September 1995. Funding arrangements also require that only NCVQ approved qualifications are offered in these vocational areas. Consequently, most of the working class women in further education receive some type of competence based education because health and social care, secretarial and hairdressing courses are now only being offered as GNVQs or NVQs.

There are many aspects of GNVQs that are open to criticism - these include the way in which they were piloted, the methods of assessment and delivery, the language used, problems resulting from rapidly changing specifications, the type of external testing used, the amount of administration involved and the theoretical base of competence based learning (see, for example, OFSTED,1993; Smithers, 1993; Ashworth, 1992; Marshall, 1991). For example, two particular aspects of the national diplomas help students progress to higher education - these are the work experience placements and individual grades within each unit. In GNVQs placements are no longer compulsory and only one grade is given; this is fuelling concerns about progression to higher education. I am concentrating here on the way in which dominant Conservative ideology is both controlled and promoted in the structure and content of GNVQs. Conservative governments since 1979 have had two main philosophical emphases. These are the primacy of market forces and the emphasis on individualism (highlighted by Margaret Thatcher's notorious statement that there is no such thing as society). These emphases are apparent in the content of GNVQs and reinforced by the structure.

NCVQ, on behalf of the government, devised the structure of GNVQs and the content of the mandatory vocational units. These units have to be used by all the awarding bodies and have to be given to each student in the prescribed format without altering the wording. They are assessed by external multiple choice tests, approved by NCVQ (RSA, 1993) and by projects that involve collecting evidence to show that the student can meet the performance criteria. The optional vocational units are written by the awarding bodies and so content can vary, although all follow the common format and are subject to NCVQ approval.

The number of units varies according to the level of the GNVQ; for the advanced level GNVQ (equivalent to two A Levels) there are 12 vocational units (eight of these are mandatory) plus three core skill units and for the intermediate level

(equivalent to four GCSEs) there are six vocational units (four mandatory) and three core skills units. There are also additional units available at each level.

Each vocational unit is divided into three elements that are described as outcomes. Each element has performance criteria, a range statement and evidence indicators. I am going to take three typical examples which will illustrate some of the ways in which Conservative ideology is incorporated into the units. The first example shows how unit content is used to control both what is learnt and what theoretical perspectives it is informed by. The unit test is then used to enforce this.

The advanced level mandatory unit 1 is called Access, Equal Opportunities and Client Rights (BTEC, 1993a). It has 3 elements -

1. Investigate attitudes and other social influences on behaviour;
2. Investigate discrimination and its effects on individuals;
3. Describe how equal opportunities are maintained.

I will explore Element 2 :-

'*performance criteria*:

1. different types of discrimination are explained
2. different bases of discrimination are explained
3. main ways in which discrimination is reinforced through language are described
4. potential effects of discrimination on the individual in different contexts are explained

Range: Type of discrimination: overt, covert, (disadvantage, devaluing, avoidance)

Bases of discrimination: race, gender, age, physical ability, cognitive ability

Discrimination in language: choice of words and assumptions implied, tone, accompanying non-verbal signals

Potential effects:self-esteem/self-confidence; access to services and opportunities' (ibid; p.6)

Clearly, the basis of this is an approach that defines discrimination as something done by one individual to another by excluding any mention of power. The way in which this element is presented negates those feminist and anti racist perspectives that understand oppression in terms of power and social control. It also excludes various aspects of 'discrimination' such as violence and abuse of power and the way in which oppressed groups can organise together. The range statement makes it seem that the main way of discriminating is through language. This unit purports to be based on the value base unit of the care and childcare NVQs - however that unit includes specific mention of lesbian and gay identity (BTEC, 1992. p.21) who are excluded in the GNVQ range statements. Range statements are intended to 'place clear limits around the areas of knowledge/performance in which achievement should be expected' and 'refer to what candidates need to understand' (BTEC, June 1993, p.17). There seems to be direct intention to exclude lesbians and gay men.

As with other units, the external test reinforces the ideology of the unit. The sample test item for this unit is as follows:

'Use of a 'label' which applies to a whole group is usually discriminatory because:

a) a whole group cannot be described
b) there are no common characteristics in most groups
c) the individuals in the group are not recognised
d) it might not be wholly correct'

(RSA, 1993; p.6)

The opening statement in this example is of course open to debate because naming an oppression can be a powerful tool; many oppressed groups deliberately use their 'label'. The correct answer here is c) and demonstrates again the emphasis on individualistic explanations of behaviour.

The second example of this individualist perspective is in the advanced level mandatory unit 'Health Promotion' that has been written to avoid inclusion of social factors such as poverty and their relation to ill health and emphasises individual responsibility for health. The theoretical perspective is reactionary because it completely ignores the social and political factors affecting health and health promotion whilst focusing on 'substance abuse, sexual practices, risks to personal safety, smoking'. Until now, the phrase 'health promotion' has been used to indicate that the writer/speaker acknowledges that social factors affect health; the change of use in this unit represents an aspect of the ideological struggle currently surrounding health issues as well as educational ones.

The third example is about market forces and funding. The emphasis on market forces has driven the government's economic policy as instanced by the introduction of markets into the NHS. Part of the propaganda about the NHS changes is an attempt to persuade that the competition resulting from the internal markets will lead to better quality care.

The arguments are generally presented in terms of limited resources setting priorities and completely avoid discussion of either how the availability of resources is determined or how priorities are set in the economy. Mandatory Unit 6 'Structure and Practices in Health and Social Care' is structured

in a way that reflects this understanding. One of the elements is 'Investigate the impact of legislation and funding on provision and priorities'. The range statement gives the factors influencing priorities as the 'state of the economy, availability of scarce resources, political priorities' (BTEC, May 1993; p.16) It could be argued that the inherent epistemological stance could be subverted by a teacher using discussion and activities about political priorities. However, the external test is set so that acceptance of market philosophy is needed before the right answers can be reached. Here are two examples of test questions:

'2. What is the difference between fund holding and non-fund holding GP practices?
a) fund holders are in a position to buy services for patients
b) non-fund holders have access to unlimited funds
c) fund holders are limited to the numbers of patients on roll
d) non-fund holders are always individual GPs.'
(BTEC, September 1993)

'In 1989 the Government produced a document called 'Caring for People'. The NHS and Community Care Act 1990 made the necessary legal changes.

20 Decide whether each of these statements is True (T) or False (F)
(i) The act makes sure that there will be a wide variety of service providers and this will result in better community care services.
(ii) The act makes sure that everyone has an entitlement to care.'(ibid)

In the first example the correct answer is a). At best this question presents a superficial test of the students' understanding of these issues. At worst, the inference is that fund holders can buy services and presumably their patients are getting better care than non-fund holders... In the second example statement (i) is a *non sequitur* - a wide variety of service providers do not necessarily affect the quality of community care services in any way. In actuality there is evidence of many problems with the Community Care act and no definitive evidence that community care services are better. However, the correct answer is that statement (i) is true and statement (ii) is false.
The external tests are causing various problems - the pass mark has been reduced twice and is now 70% and the Chief Examiners report on the January test series indicated that candidates 'are unsure of the facts':

'In Structures and Practices in Health and Social Care students demonstrated that they were still unfamiliar with the overall framework of the current system for the provision of Health and Social Care and, as in the Intermediate papers, the candidates knowledge of legislation and sources of funding within the services appeared very limited.' (Hodgson-Wilson, 1994)

If the units are taught in a way that introduces students to the different political and philosophical perspectives in the subject area they will need to understand that the external test is set from only one of these perspectives and that the right answer has to be found within that framework. This requires a fairly sophisticated understanding of the social construction of knowledge and there are limited opportunities for students to gain this.
The grading system also promotes acceptance of the dominant philosophy within GNVQs. One overall grade is given based on criteria for three themes which are -

1. planning and organising work
2. 'information-seeking and information-handling'
3. evaluating work done during an activity

Criteria are given for each grading theme and each level but none require the student to analyse and evaluate their information. A student who uncritically accepts the ideas about the introduction of markets into the NHS would be able to achieve a distinction without even being aware that there are different views on the subject. Merit or distinction grades are meant to indicate that the student is a suitable candidate for higher education.
The ideological perspectives and priorities of the conservative government are promoted through the content and structure of GNVQs by the agency of NCVQ. The much more rigid control of the curriculum means that there will be less opportunity for working class women to develop an understanding of their social position through their education. Giving working class women the opportunity to develop a critical perspective has not been at the forefront of any kind of vocational education but the previous system did leave room for it. Implementation of GNVQs means that women are now going to be tested on their understanding of and acceptance of Conservative philosophy. Failure to produce the 'correct' answers means failure of the qualification.

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Identity, the adult learner and institutional change

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Introduction

This paper derives from an in-depth, autobiographical study of mature student motivation. It challenges some existing assumptions about why adults enter and continue in higher education and, in the process, raises a number of basic questions about the nature of higher education and its current direction.

Motivational Research and Our Study

Research into adult student motivation suggests that factors of a goal oriented/vocational nature may be most significant in the decisions of mature people to pursue higher education or certificated forms of continuing education (Woodley et al, 1987; see McGivney, 1990 for a summary of the evidence). Whilst such studies also indicate the importance of more personal factors these remain largely unexplored (ibid). This may be unsurprising given a reliance on quantitative, survey methods and, arguably, a simplistic use of highly problematic categories in factor analysis (for example, distinguishing 'personal' from 'vocational'). Motivational research may also be ensnared in wider ideological disputes about what leads people to learn. A growing body of government-sponsored research appears to suggest highly individualistic, vocational or business reasons for participation (see, for example, Maguire, Maguire and Felstead, 1994 and Department of Employment, 1993). There is, perhaps, a suspicious correspondence between these conclusions and dominant ideologies: the research helps sustain a story about people pursuing education and occupational goals for material self-advancement against a backcloth of a meritocratic culture.

The fact that some individuals may rationalise their actions in vocational or business terms may be a poignant example of what Foucault terms 'regimes of truth' legitimating what can most appropriately be said. It may feel more acceptable, to self and others, to rationalise actions in socially acceptable ways.

Researchers such as Courtney (1992) have gone some way to challenging what may be an ontological as well as a methodological poverty. He suggests that mature students use higher education as a response to change and can be engaged, no less, in a struggle to reconstruct themselves. He considers cultural, contextual factors, such as a supportive environment and relationships, as important in facilitating participation and change. But Courtney, while acknowledging the centrality of change and remaking of self, fails to develop his ideas in any sustained way.

We wanted therefore to explore motivation and changing selves more deeply and chose to do so by examining participation in the context of whole life histories. We have been conducting up to six interviews, supplemented by personal journals, with thirty students over a period of eighteen months. The intention was to create a relaxed, reflexive and empowering research climate in which students were able to explore their autobiography and the place of higher education within it.

Students were chosen from a variety of backgrounds in terms of age, class, gender and ethnicity. The first interviews took place whilst students were involved in an Access course (designed to prepare them for university). Subsequently, most students have been interviewed in their first year of higher education. We are using an inter-disciplinary analysis with theoretical and methodological frameworks drawn from sociology, feminism, psychology, psychoanalysis, critical linguistics and cultural theory, to interpret the stories being told.

On narrative, stated reasons, change and transition

It may be important at this juncture to explain what we consider to be the relationship between language, identity and personal history. Self-narratives are, in our view, not simply descriptions of life experiences; as narratives they can be considered to be rather more than passive conveyers of experience. Rather, the stories we tell give meaning to events. As the self is re-evaluated and made anew, the nature of personal narrative, and the interpretation of self and history within it, change accordingly. A changing story is the prerequisite of a changing self.

Kerby (1991), among others, focuses on the crucial importance of language as constitutive of the self, and talks of narratives as a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world and ultimately ourselves. Similarly Giddens (1990), from a sociological viewpoint, argues that a person's identity is not found in behaviour *per se* but in the

narratives surrounding it. Survival and well-being depend on what he terms the reflexive project of the self which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives. These narratives are both contingent on and constitutive of the social structures and relationships which they describe. Rather than merely reporting a social reality they become part of a dialectical process in which the construction of the narratives themselves partly create the structures and relationships that they describe.

Our research confirms how stories both provide coherence and are revised as confidence and reflexivity develop, as a sense of identity as learner and individual with a voice and view, grows. Initial reasons for participation give way to an examination of other, perhaps submerged, aspects of personal history. At first, most, if not all, students gave occupational reasons for their decisions and tended to discount other factors. Yet as they reflected on what becoming a teacher or a solicitor might represent, other personal and historical factors surfaced.

The notion of becoming a solicitor in the case of one working class woman graphically illustrates the point. She expressed a need, as she put it in her third interview, to *'get inside, to understand how the law works cause I felt bewildered as a 13 year old when my parents were getting divorced. No-one consulted me, explained anything to me. I was left to muddle through'*. She reflected on the themes of power and powerlessness and the way her childhood distress went unacknowledged and was never subsequently resolved.

In a way becoming a solicitor was a means to make herself heard, to empower, to take control of situations rather than having them control her. As interviews unfolded, other students would describe how thinking of motivation created links between temporally distant events, present and past pain: how feelings of failure, frustration, resentment and inadequacy, including those from earliest childhood, could surface in the here and now to fuel or constrain current actions.

The reasons for higher education often lay in changing circumstances, perhaps of a painful kind, which connected with old wounds. The immediate pain might be the result of redundancy, children leaving home, depression or a disintegrating relationship (sometimes many of these combined). However, as experiences disrupted the normal rhythms of getting through the day, of coping, basic questions emerged about past and present lifestyles, values, personal histories and possible futures. Memories, and the strong feelings often associated with them, seeped through the fragments.

Changes in marital and family relationships - divorce, children growing up - came high on the list for many of the women, while redundancy or illness were significant for the men although changes in relationships were important here too. People would recall bouts of depression (the incidence of depression was very high in our sample), of dissatisfaction and confusion, of barely holding things together over a number of years. For many, the depression and emptiness may have been rooted in childhood: connected to parental divorce, a father or mother leaving home or lack of empathic relationships more generally, which left them insecure and unvalued at the core.

As they decided to rethink what they were doing, through necessity or choice, and turned to higher education to assist in the process, they began to discover, sometimes slowly and painfully, feelings of greater personal legitimacy, that they had a right to do things for themselves. However, this was often infused with guilt and anxiety, echoing processes of change and conscientization described in the women's movement (see McLaren, 1985). Breaking a silence brings mixed emotions. There may, for example, be great pain, as Miller and others have noted, in revisiting and reinterpreting childhood with its repressed feelings and traumas, as well as potential for liberation (Miller, 1993).

Revising self-narratives is also a way of managing transition and giving it meaning. While the latter may be illusive, a confidence to tell new stories appears a profoundly necessary part of reconstituting the self. It is interesting that the students remarked how the research process itself played an important role in bringing things together, of creating meaning and unity across time (see Lloyd, 1993 on the unifying, integrative role of narrative).

Managing change and revising narrative, as the students saw it, often relied on the support and advice of significant others, such as friends, some of whom had themselves taken the step into higher education. At the same time, some learners were resentful at the lack of support from close family or friends. In such circumstances, they talked of forging a new identity regardless of the resistance they were meeting from partners, workmates or lovers. Whereas they might previously have been willing to sublimate their own selves to the demands of others, the experience of the course increased resistance to carrying on as before.

The sociological concept of 'marginality' may be helpful in explaining such processes. As change unfolds, as a different narrative is formulated, as people begin to feel estranged from some of the people around them - at work, home or within their community - they can be said to become marginal within these groups. They may begin to look

elsewhere, to other groups such as those in higher education. It is significant that many, if not all, in our sample had known some educational success, albeit rudely interrupted, first time round. Education represented a potentially sympathetic space in which to rebuild (see Hopper and Osborn, 1975).

However, the question remains as to why many individuals are willing to risk the security and stability of relationships, of old affiliations, of an existing job at times of economic uncertainty, to enter higher education. Part of the answer seems to lie in persistent and growing feelings of incompleteness, emptiness, lack of freedom, the absence of a distinct identity which can no longer be tolerated. Most talked of the importance of being 'me': of being more authentic and whole. The answer might also lie in what higher education itself may symbolise: a potentially stable monolith, a source of support, meaning and renewal, at times of kaleidoscopic change and uncertainty.

A Case Study

It may be useful to illustrate some of these themes in a case study. The example is of a working class man in his late 30s. It illustrates how themes such as identity crisis, sublimation of self to others, and the struggle for a more authentic voice apply in this situation as well as in the more widely documented histories of middle aged, middle class, female returners.

In the first interview 'Jim' talked about his ambitions, the impact of redundancy and the Access course on his life. Other themes were also mentioned but not developed, not the least with his father:

...I started off as a boiler maker in the Dockyard. Progressed to become on the administration side...Was just beginning to find my ladders to climb up...and the Dockyard was closed. (Then it was) office furniture, the main company sold it off to the managers...which resulted in me getting made redundant again...I think it comes down to my father, it is all you know, get an apprenticeship, get into engineering and it is a job for life which was true in 1970-odd when I started...I had been guided in the wrong direction. At the age of 14,15. Probably from my father's side, probably out of trying to do the best for his children.

How does he feel about what you are doing now?

I'm not sure if he actually understands it. I think it is like the generation gap. I have tried to explain to him what I am doing. I'm not sure he understands...In our close circles, we don't realise what is going on.

The narrative moves on and indicates the impact of the course and College on his life as well as the importance of other students in changing stories and identity:

I've enjoyed it. I really feel I have gained an awful lot from this...I actually miss the tutorials here. I find them interesting, stimulating, which is something - I don't think I have ever experienced that before, even at work, you know, when you had time off work, you loved your time off. But away from this college, I actually - I miss it.

The narrative moved in a later interview to more explicit comments on early relationships in forging what he feels was a false identity. His lack of confident self regard is partly, as he interprets it, a matter of class, but also of emotional distance between himself and his parents, most of all his father:

I am not trying to alienate myself from any class, I'm trying to just be me, maybe and it is very hard. My parents probably still see me as I was when I lived with them. They don't see me as I am now...I would like to be free. There is a feeling I would like to be free and being able to say what you would like and being able to back it up as well...Whereas in a work place, you don't get anything like that. You have to conform to the norm really...No, I don't think he (the father) really understands what I am doing...I can talk to him. It is just I am not sure how much of it actually goes in...it hurts you when people are not interested in what you think.

Jim, in our view, would not have talked like this in one interview alone. He needed time to feel confident and assured in the process. The rich narrative which results points to a number of interrelated psychological and cultural factors underlying his motivation: the absence of empathic relationships in childhood and beyond and the implications of this for his feelings about himself. There is also the need for agency: the experience of control, of authorship in his life and a necessity perhaps for differentiation - a belief in one's distinctiveness as a person (see Mollon, 1993). Jim's narrative also reminds us of the harsh material realities underlying alienation including the regimentation of the dockyard.

The interviews show how students may look to the university to make sense of a range of existential and experiential questions. Students talk of their subjects - in this instance psychology, politics and sociology - helping them understand personal experience. As one woman put it:

'So subjects which I don't know a great deal about, I just have the facts, jumbled up facts and it enables me to put the facts in some sort of order, see it as a whole and then I understand it and that's what is so good. It's being able to put all these facts into perspective, relating to other things, the linking...and then you have to try and understand what I'm learning and then fit it together with other things I didn't obviously previously realise linked...for example, my father and I went to Margate one day and he pointed out a shop and said 'when I was a little boy that was a toy shop and I thought it was an enormous store'. That was a piece of information that I'd picked up and put it away but now having done social history I can see that shop must have been very large for its time, very innovative, very exciting for a child...I can take the fact that my father said there was a toy shop and now understand and feel how that must have felt as a new shop so it enables me to get more feelings...another word is understanding. For me if I can feel the ways something feels that makes me feel good.'

However, the extent to which higher education, as presently constituted, is fully able to respond to the challenge and possibilities presented by such students may be another matter. By the fourth and fifth interview Jim and others had become perplexed at the way in which aspects of the course did not fit together, about changed attendance requirements and students not being consulted. The struggle to rebuild could, as another student put it, *'be placed in limbo'* by the sense of uncertainty and fragmentation which she perceived within higher education. Perhaps the fragmentation of the curriculum, including modularity, alongside worsening staff-student ratios and the consequent difficulties of getting to know and interacting with tutors, may add many notes of disappointment and frustration to the stories being told.

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Reflective practice: a methodology for the future of organisation development

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It was with a sense of recording personal history and yet not being fully aware of the value of what I was doing that this current exercise of keeping a research diary began. Perhaps chroniclers throughout the ages had little realisation of the significance of their reflections. Likewise I feel I have not and will not fully appreciate the value of the chronicling of my learning until later. That feeling is for me inherent in the reflective practice approach to learning.

Keeping a research diary has been a difficult task. I have an aversion to recording the minutia of my life for posterity. I disagree with Oscar Wilde when he said, 'I never travel without my diary; everyone should have something sensational to read in the train'. Yet as part of the discipline I work at doing exactly that. It began as an unknown quantity, an act of faith and dedication to the work I wanted to do. How important a source for material it would be was unknown, I had encouraged others to undertake the practice but this time I had to accept the practice for myself and internalise the theory. Despite that knowledge I was unsure about what I would gain in practice.

I found myself pondering all the questions I had been asked in the past by others trying to keep a learning diary. Such questions as how much should I record of the events and how much should I write? Did a research diary for an MEd. need 100 or 1000 words for each entry? Should it look like a carefully presented well written piece of academic work or could I just write ' had a bad day' ? I was looking for answers and wanting someone to tell me I was doing it right. Yet I knew that as a document I needed it to be useful for me in the context of preparing my dissertation. Only I could know what that would mean for me. This state has some similarities to the work of Knowles when he discusses the adult learners' readiness to learn at different stages of their life (Knowles, 1976; pp. 45-47). It is out of the process of recording and writing the dissertation for my MEd. in Continuing Education that this paper arises.

The dissertation has coincided with the change in my working arrangements from the role of management development trainer to Human Resources Advisor in Organisation Development. With the imminent arrival of Trust status and totally new structures of operation providing new opportunities for managers and developers alike the emphasis on organisation development has gathered pace, and with the increased pace came the change in name which then generated further rapid change.

The research topic is an exploration of the relationship between the task and the process and the effect of the interaction on the researcher's learning process. The task is to investigate the need for an accredited diploma level programme of management study. The nature of the work is to look at the dialectic of the task and the process. They are not separate entities but are aspects of the whole. Each aspect contains the other and the development of both is dependent on the other. This is not because they merge and join and separate but because they are of each other. This paper focuses on the second part of the work and the relationship of the influencing factors and discusses how reflective practice can enhance organisation development.

The title of organisation development has been a change in itself for me. For many years I worked in the field of management development. The shift of emphasis has meant a re-defining of how I have perceived myself in the context of my work and how I perceived my work. For quite a considerable period of time during the transition to organisation development I was greatly angered and felt extremely de-skilled. I looked to my dissertation as a way of repudiating that pain. It was only as I felt myself coming out of the trough that I can look at what was happening and recognise it. My diary for the period is charged with painful language and anger, it seems ostensibly to have nothing to do with my learning and yet with the benefit of hindsight I can see it has everything to do with my learning. As I have begun to write my dissertation more fully these issues have become clear, they help to answer my first questions regarding the value of the diary.

As the reader will have already appreciated the approach being taken means that I am to some extent the provider of my research data. I am both the researched and the researcher. This meant that the recording process was critical in gaining insight into the issues. Two things happened, I attempted to capture in the learning diary the incidents whilst they were as fresh as possible and also attempted to analyse what they meant for me. Van Manen says that this practice is therefore always with hindsight. No matter how close to the event we can never reflect whilst we are active in the experience it has always gone and the very act of reflecting and recording can change the nature of the perception.

> 'Actually it has been argued that all description is ultimately interpretation.' [Van Manen, 1990; pp. 25]

An example of this process is offered below :-

> *'I have just been looking at the data I collected from.....At this stage I feel the schedule is appropriate and does not need changing. At one point in the interview I thought I may have got the structure wrong and I would need to change it all. That was momentary panic and soon passed.*
>
> *It would probably help to consider why that moment of panic happened. I think ..... re-phrased the original question and as he did so it sounded different and I remember saying yes to his paraphrase and then trying to change it on my paper and hoping he would not notice. As I did I realised he was answering my original question.*
>
> *There is an issue here about the power relationships in the interviews I am going to undertake and perhaps this one in particular. However I chose to see.....first. All the interviewees have a considerable degree of hierarchy based power and none more so than....*(Middling, Research Diary, 1993)

The learning from this for me was that even though I know this person well given this formal approach and owning the responsibility for the work I was still susceptible to the hierarchy and status of the individual.

The aspect of learning from the event is particularly important to my work in organisation development. The importance lies in the concept of organisation development and its requirements on individuals and their learning. Brooks and Supina discuss the way effective learning takes place and suggest from a series of studies undertaken that the managers who were questioned felt their learning was not dependant on the approach to development often employed by an organisation in providing classroom based activities. The other circumstances of their lives and working context provided them with greater and more meaningful activities. (Brooks, Supina, 1992; pp. 156-165). The aim of my diary and examination of my learning process is then to help people to recognise that learning is there for the taking and help them recognise what they do and how to use that to stimulate their learning.

Organisation development requires a change and that change process is intensely personal as described by Duck:

> 'Change is intensely personal. For change to occur in any organisation, each individual must think, feel, or do something different. Even in large organisations, which depend on thousands of employees understanding company strategies well enough to translate them into appropriate actions, leaders must win their followers one by one.' (Duck, 1993; p. 109)

If my work can contribute in some small measure to those 'followers' being won and understanding the part they play and the responsibility they have for their own learning and development then its aim will be fulfilled. In asking others to do this I have attempted to learn from specific tasks and to recognise and declare my ontological position .

An important theme of organisation development is to encourage the development and seek to achieve the learning organisation as defined by Garvin:

> 'A learning organisation is an organisation skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights.' (Garvin, 1993; p. 80)

Organisation development is the creation, development, and enhancement of the collective will and energy of all the people in the organisation to move forward. It then follows that the use of reflective practice as a means to encourage this position will reflect Usher's claim that:

> 'all theory is a form of practice and all practice is a kind of theory.' (Usher, 1987; p. 30)

The adoption of reflective practice as a second nature practice for the organisation could provide the link between the knowledge and practice base of the discipline in which the individual works but also with the informed approach to learning as a discipline itself.

The encouragement of this approach needs to be thought through carefully and it is perhaps worth sounding a note of caution for the organisation by using Welton's point when he says in *Vivisecting the Nightingale: reflections on adult education as an object of study,* that adult education began as a powerful movement for social change. It was collective not individualistic or hedonistic (Welton, 1987; pp. 46-68). The message for organisation developers and organisations alike is that once you hand over responsibility for an organisation to learn collectively then the issues of control of direction may need to be addressed more fully and in a more open way. The setting of the direction will probably cease to be a function of the board and the Chief Executive and become a collective responsibility. The learning implications in that change may send ripples which never stop.

Certain steps have been taken already which aim to produce a practical outcome in linking learning to the opportunities which arise everyday and in the way the organisation views research as a practice. Within my job role I have the chance to encourage the use of reflective practice both in research and in other development activities.

Another important aspect in writing the dissertation has been the use of metaphors. They have proved to be an ongoing theme of the work. Understanding their use has been an exercise in raising my awareness of language and its uses. At first I used them because I liked them, they held music and a symbolic significance for me. This helped as I was grappling with some of the more complex issues which I have tried to address. Gradually I began to realise that it was also a sense of visualising on paper those same ideas, and finally I have come to recognise that word pictures are for me a way of expressing learning or acknowledging that a concept has been internalised. Their use helps to clarify what is known and how it relates to my perception of the world. They are not a literary indulgence; they serve to enhance my learning and to make it explicit. Through this approach there is a tentative reaching out to Hegel's realised level as described by John Rowan. In his discussion of the Hegelian approach, Rowan describes the use of symbols and images as being possible at the realised level of development in the following way:

> ' at the realised level we are now able deliberately to use images and symbols in creative ways for our research purposes.' (Reason and Rowan, . 1990; p. 116)

So to end with a metaphor which describes my feeling about the dissertation and its creation. If you envisage a loaf of bread called a plait, before it is baked the strands are obviously there and to some extent their route can be traced by the eye. Once the bread is baked, the shape remains consistent with the plait but the separate strands are no longer traceable. They are both wholly in their individual places yet have become part of the other strands, achieving the completeness of the loaf. The aim is to try to keep the strands of this work apart as individual pieces but also to see them in the context of the whole process leading to an outcome.

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The formation of academic identities: relationships, reference groups and networks in the adult education community

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My aim in this paper is to examine how university-based adult educators perceive themselves in relation to groups and networks in their professional community. I shall draw on a study conducted in 1992 among university-based practitioners of adult education, in which I explored the operation of professional networks, or invisible colleges, in adult education. I was concerned to discover how those I interviewed formed their identities as adult educators, how they located themselves in relation to professional organisations and networks and what they perceived to be important sources of influence on their intellectual development and pedagogic practice.

This research is rooted in aspects of my own experience. It has been clear to me for a number of years now that various groups to which I belong have been very important in shaping my values and behaviour, both professionally and personally.

The formation of my academic identity

As a postgraduate student I perceived the world of research as a sort of secret society which I was anxious to join. I saw researchers as extremely clever individuals who sat at their desks being inspired and having brilliant ideas. It was some time before it dawned on me that knowledge was developed collectively, and that researchers had interpersonal connections and exercised influence over each others' work. The idea that developments in social science came about as a result of connections between people who studied at the same institution, supervised each others' theses, and even lived and slept together, was a revelation. At some point in the development of this new and exciting perspective on sociology as network rather than discipline, I read Diana Crane's *Invisible Colleges* (1972), a study of the diffusion of knowledge amongst scientific communities. I thought it was fascinating.

A turning point in the development of my academic identity came with my appointment to a lectureship in the University of Manchester in 1979. During my time as a doctoral student I had felt my status to be extremely marginal, and it would not have occurred to me to describe myself as an academic. But some very important processes of professional socialisation began as soon as I took up my new post.

When I started work in Manchester I was uncertain about the expectations my colleagues had of me. I was frustrated by the absence of suitable role models. As I was told several times during my first few weeks in the job, I was the first woman to be appointed to an academic post in the Department of Adult and Higher Education in living memory; the only other female persons I encountered in Department were secretaries and administrative staff.

I identified myself more readily as a sociologist than as an adult educator at this time, and the first colleagues in Manchester with whom I felt an affinity were other sociologists, mostly in the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies. However, a sub-group in my own department gradually began to emerge as a source of solidarity, friendship and coffee-break chat. Its members helped to socialise me into the mysteries of academic life — which meetings it was important to attend; how to pick my way through faculty regulations and how to deal with external examiners; where to go for lunch; which were the most useful journals; which conferences to attend; and whose names to drop. It became clear that I had more in common with my colleagues in Adult and Higher Education than with the school-based educators in other parts of the Faculty.

I attended the 1979 SCUTREA conference on the advice of colleagues, but it was not until several years later that I began to see this organisation as an important and significant network in my personal map of the world. In 1986 I visited the USA as part of the transatlantic exchange programme organised through SCUTREA, and attended the 27th Annual Adult Education Research Conference. As a result, I began to see a group of my fellow exchanges as a significant reference group, and the AERC (or perhaps a sub-group of its participants) also emerged as a source of professional socialisation, support and identity.

Experiences like these helped me to make sense of the work in the sociology of science which I had encountered during my time as a research student and served to bring to life concepts such as those of invisible colleges and reference groups. I wanted to investigate these phenomena further, and my study leave in Australia in 1992 afforded an opportunity to do so.

Theoretical concepts

In *Little Science, Big Science* (1965), Derek De Solla Price uses the term 'invisible colleges' to describe how groups develop within large and widespread scientific communities. He suggests that for each group there exists a circuit of institutions, research centres and conferences which enables individual members of the group to meet piecemeal, so that over a number of years everyone in that field knows everyone else. The invisible college is seen as a vehicle for conferring status and prestige.

Diana Crane develops the concept in her study of the diffusion of knowledge in scientific communities (1972). She focuses particularly on communication networks among mathematicians and rural sociologists, and shows how invisible colleges help to unify areas of knowledge and to provide coherence and direction to the fields within which they operate. She suggests that the central figures and their associates in these networks 'are closely linked by direct ties and develop a kind of solidarity that is useful in building morale and maintaining motivation among members' (p. 139).

More recently, Tony Becher (1989) has investigated the operation of academic 'tribes' (including patterns of communication and socialisation) and the demarcation of academic territories inside higher education. Unfortunately, adult education is not among the twelve disciplines he examines in detail.

A reference group is defined by Robert Merton as a group which provides 'a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation' (1957, p. 283). It may be significant as a source of norms or values whether or not one is actually a member of that group; sometimes a group which to which one does not belong is important in helping to sort out what or whom one is *not*.

Investigating invisible colleges in Australia

In 1992 I spent six months in Australia, researching and teaching in the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). During my stay at UTS I conducted the study amongst university-based practitioners of adult education to which I referred at the beginning of this paper, where my aim was to investigate the operation of invisible colleges in adult education.

I collected data through lengthy interviews with twenty-two individuals (seven women and fifteen men). Since I was on study leave in the institution where most of my respondents were based, some additional data were collected through participant observation. I also conducted action research workshops in which a number of my respondents participated.

The adult education community in Australia has some links with that in the UK, although the groups are somewhat distinct. I knew enough of the world which my respondents inhabited to be able to ask informed questions, but was sufficiently marginal to it to enable them to talk relatively freely about their networks and interconnections.

UTS contains the largest concentration of academics concerned with teaching and research in adult education in Australasia. One of my respondents said, 'I know just about everyone who teaches adult education in Australia. There are not many ... most of them are here.'

I have explored some of the themes which emerged from the study in a paper presented in the USA at the 1994 Adult Education Research Conference (Miller, 1994). One significant finding relates to the importance of opinion leaders (see Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955) in professional networks. Such individuals read widely, attend conferences and other professional meetings regularly and are active networkers, often acting as mentors or sponsors for junior colleagues; they are influential in relation to those around them, and play an active part in shaping the knowledge base of their field. Another theme which I discuss in the AERC paper is the importance of personal contacts and recommendations in shaping patterns of reading, writing and citing. Here I propose to concentrate on patterns of membership and non-membership in relation to invisible colleges, some differences between the perceptions of male and female respondents of the operation of networks, and the importance of electronic mail in maintaining networks.

Significant networks

Most of my respondents saw their membership of professional networks and informal groups as extremely important in terms of their career development. The networks mentioned most frequently were Australian organisations such as the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE), the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA), the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), the Australian Consortium for Experiential Education (ACEE) and the Australian Institute of Training and Development (AITD).

Three of those I interviewed perceived North American groupings such as the AERC and the Commission of Professors to be significant in terms of their own development, while three others mentioned SCUTREA as an influential network. The International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education (ILSCAE) and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

were each mentioned by three respondents as important. Three of my respondents had in the past belonged to a small but significant group based in Sydney which had monthly meetings and called itself the Black Eagles of Adult Education ('a really good secret society name', said a founder member).

One of my respondents explained how he conceived the significance and operation of one of the professional networks to which he belonged in the following way:

> '(I see) H. ... not so much [as] the Society but [as] the network of people involved in educational development — but that really represents and identifies a significant group. People in that [group] are always somewhat beleaguered in their own institution. There are always very few of them, often fewer ... than there are adult educators, which says something. It produces a sense of a supportive network as distinct from a network of rivalry.'

In some cases it was clear that non-membership of groups or networks was as significant as membership. Several of my respondents talked of groups which they thought were significant in defining who they were *not*, or which they saw as clearly 'other'. One of them described a significant experience in relation to a national organisation with which he now felt out of sympathy:

> 'I have come and gone from groups. I have tried some and I have abandoned them ... A good example is A. I joined it because I thought 'Look, I am in a Faculty of Adult Education ..., I really should belong to the national group on adult education,' but then I found that the articles in its journal were being written by people like the wife of the Prime Minister and so I thought, 'Why am I reading this? It is like reading the *Women's Weekly* or something.''

Another respondent thought that groups to which he did not belong exercised an indirect influence on his work by virtue of the fact that some of his colleagues belonged to them:

> 'I made a conscious decision not to be involved [in C.]. I have not been to any of their conferences or anything like that and yet they have an influence because some of my colleagues are involved. And other associations that people are involved in, to the extent that they influence my colleagues, influence me.'

Invisible colleges as enabling — or exclusive?

The majority of my respondents talked of the invisible colleges to which they belonged in positive terms, and saw such groupings as enabling and empowering. Influential individuals cited by my respondents were generally characterised as mentors or gate-openers. However, some networks were seen as exercising undue influence over careers and reputations:

> 'I always think there are some gravy trains out there that I am not on because I haven't sort of tipped the driver. One that I am not on the inside of but which is clearly influential is ... the publishing world ... That is a very insidious network and has a very important gatekeepering role. You can see that at work. I had a couple of chapters in a Jossey-Bass thing once ... and the students here asked, 'How the hell did you get invited to do that?' So I put it all up on the blackboard. It was all, you know, who knew who.'

Several (though not all) of my female respondents saw gender as an important variable in determining patterns of membership of certain invisible colleges. One, who talked of 'a very strong male Mafia', and said 'I have ... a fairly difficult and stressful relationship with the guys I work with inside the university', reported that she felt excluded from some powerful decision-making groups because she was a woman. Some of the men I interviewed made reference to 'mateship' (a term generally used in Australia to signify forms of male bonding) as significant in determining with which of their colleagues they chose to work.

One of the men recognised that he tended to collaborate primarily with male colleagues, and, while he felt that this was not entirely desirable, he felt some limitations on his power to change this, partly because he saw collaborative working as a strategic part of his career development, and he perceived that the influential individuals in his field were generally male:

> 'I think it would be better if my immediate network was more balanced gender-wise. It would be good. There is no reason why it can't be in the future but it requires the time. It needs a little bit of effort to put the time in. It is not as if there is a female player who is operating in the area that I am operating in now.'

Gendered views of networks

There seemed to be something of a split along gender lines in relation to the ways my respondents characterised how they operated in relation to their networks, and, indeed, to the benefits they derived from these groups. The men to whom I talked generally emphasised instrumental reasons for attending conferences or joining organisations; for example, they tended to see conferences as significant in terms of linking them into national and international networks of adult educators. One individual described his conference attendance as part of a conscious networking strategy:

> 'I went along [to S. conference] as a learner there because I felt very undernetworked in terms of adult ed. in the UK ... The reason I went to S. was not because of the content of the conference but in order to meet people in the field, to suss them out.'

One of the senior practitioners in my sample described his approach to conferences in the following way:

> 'I have had a wonderfully frustrating time trawling every conference in human resource development ... on behalf of my friends and colleagues ... My first question would have to be 'Is there any conference in the world that will be in any way satisfying to us?''

In contrast, the women I interviewed tended to emphasis the affective benefits of belonging to networks, and more commonly stressed the good feelings (rather than, for example, the career development) that resulted from their membership. One said:

> 'I know how much I am influenced by how I like the people, how I feel about the people ... It is just such a nice feeling ... talking about things with people [with whom] it just works interestingly.'

Another woman described how she worked in one organisation with

> 'an extraordinary group of people, really dynamic ... These individuals taught me heaps. There is no question that I learned a lot from them and they were very exciting people to be with. There was a fabulous working atmosphere.'

A third said 'I have worked mainly along gender lines.'(i.e. with other women), and characterised one of the men she sometimes worked with as atypical because his main focus was not on instrumental gain:

> 'people like M. break that mould because he ...[is] much more interested in the process rather than just the task or outcome.'

Another responded to a question about how she would characterise her professional world in the following way:

> 'What is the image? There is an image of mushrooms sprouting ... in a very green field, drawn in the way of a kids' story book so there is a lot of colour, a lot of fun, a lot of things happening. Things sprouting up all over the place.'

One of the men rather envied his female colleagues their perceived ability to work together collaboratively:

> 'There is a network which works fairly well, I think ... called Women in Adult and Further Education, or Women in Adult Community Continuing and Further Education, I think. That was a women's network. There is not any men's network.'

The importance of electronic mail

Many of the invisible colleges to which my respondents referred spanned several continents, and electronic mail was frequently mentioned as an important medium for the development of relationships within professional groups. The following two comments on the importance of e-mail in facilitating communication amongst academic communities and sustaining networks are typical:

> 'E-mail is really quite critical. Like having been to North America in the early '80s and come back and having felt that I had fallen off the end of the bloody world because if you weren't at last week's conference they don't remember you exist in North America ... E-mail ... enables you to remain visible to ... people in the field. You can make interventions periodically that can have quite an influence ... You could write a particularly provocative but quite well pointed piece and for the next two days they will all be discussing you and what you said. It is a very easy way to remain visible.'

> '[E-mail] is often a lot more satisfying than a 'phone call because you actually can engage in an act of communication and be

> fairly confident that it gets through and that they will respond within a reasonable period of time ... There are some people who have an e-mail address and then never read their e-mails. They are definitely on my black list.'

Several respondents at UTS remarked that they could not now imagine being able to operate effectively in academic life without access to the Internet. It seems that some British colleagues need to combat their fear or ignorance of this form of communication, in order to avoid increasing professional isolation.

Conclusions

We are being invited in this conference to reflect upon our changing practices, contexts and identities. I believe that the operation of invisible colleges is becoming, if anything, more important as our contexts change. Certainly the national and international networks to which I belong have become increasingly significant to me as groups in my own institution have been fragmented and patterns of work have become more isolated and competitive. I see invisible colleges as indispensable components in the development of academic disciplines and fields of practice and as such they need to be rendered visible and their structures and analysed and made explicit. Of course, it is often difficult to understand and appreciate patterns in one's own everyday working practices; as one of my respondents remarked:

> 'In a sense [the network] ... is invisible to oneself. In your daily life you talk to people, you ring them up, they'll ring you up, somebody rings you up because they know somebody who knows you and it spreads out from there.'

I believe that the increasing consciousness of the importance of process, as well as content, in the organisation of SCUTREA conferences in recent years is a healthy development in this respect, and one which aids the integration of colleagues who have recently entered the field. I would argue that such consciousness needs to be imported into other arenas, so that, for example, programmes of staff development in adult education might give explicit attention to mapping significant networks and groups in the field. In this way, more colleagues will have the opportunity to benefit (both instrumentally and affectively) from invisible college membership.

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Grateful thanks to all those adult educators who agreed to be interviewed at length about their networks and life histories, and to Rod Allen for advice on computer analysis of interview transcripts.

and higher education's history provision generally, which demanded new research areas. Adult education provided a focus for teaching, research and associative organisation. Many local history societies have their roots in extra-mural classes, and most still enjoy collaborative relationships. Adult education also sustained early publishing in local history, both large and small scale, as it did in British field archaeology, a subject area which developed along similar lines. In both, the active and participatory methods of teaching and learning redefined the tutor role as 'guide and counsellor not lecturer or teacher.' (Aberg, 1975; p. 27) and enabled collaborative research between tutors and students. This led to many important publications and to the conservation of sources, especially through County Record Offices. But by the late 1970s the interests of tutors and students diverged. Students were robustly committed to the totalising Hoskin model while their tutors, partly under the influence of methodologies originating in the social sciences, were interested in specialised and comparative studies. As the subject, and its tutor/authors, gained academic respectability, students began to resent their role as foot soldiers in this campaign.

When adult education engages directly in areas of social change, especially with adults experiencing social disadvantage, conflicts of interest and debates about the purposes of education are heightened[1]. In recent years tension has developed between women's studies: owning its feminist influences and concerned to establish a distinctive methodology and core subject area; and women's education: masking its feminist antecedents and increasingly focused on new opportunities and access. These two strands used to co-exist in adult education, which provided feminist scholarship with an intellectual community, and the growth of women's studies in adult education - reviving branches, generating new cohorts of students - led to the establishment of networks sustained by newsletters, conferences and training forums.

Feminism's challenge to hierarchy adapted well to adult education's practice of active, negotiated learning. Its appeal to younger professional women meant that many students on early women's studies courses used the course to develop critiques of, and alternative practices in, their paid work[2]. Initially women's studies in higher education were far less developed and a much more defensive and isolated activity. Adult education's involvement with social change provided a space for tutors and the field to experiment and grow. This was helped by being at a remove from the discipline policing of academic objectivity and intellectual traditionalism. Not that adult education was entirely free of this - New Opportunities for Women (NOW) courses in Middlesbrough started against the warden's wishes. 'This is a university centre, not a baby minding service', he used to say.

The moral and political ground adult education occupied throughout the 1970s and 80s made it possible to have - sometimes even to win - the argument. Although the balance has now shifted back, with many of the key feminist paradigms and texts originating in higher education rather than adult education, the balance was once different. The launch of the country's first women's studies MA, at Kent, had women adult educators as keynote speakers. Women were also appointed as lecturers in, or with special responsibility for, women's studies in adult education well before they were to mainstream departments.

Cultural studies and women's studies are, to a greater extent than local history or archaeology, characterised by their partisan relation to knowledge, their revaluing of experience and the re-positioning of the learning subject in an active role. But they all share a critical subjectivity which has helped develop new academic disciplines. Adult education continues to provide examples of transformative practice, but for how long?

One Way Traffic

Creative writing developed in the margins rather than the mainstream in our institution: as culture rather than politics, as part of Community and Industrial Studies (CIS) rather than the Liberal Adult Education (LAE) programme and in Cleveland, not West Yorkshire. Our action research involved refining and improving existing creative writing provision, but also attempts to get creative writing onto the LAE programme in Cleveland, generate a debate about the relationship between creative writing courses and literature courses and extend creative writing courses in the West Yorkshire programme. In doing so we had to confront the way Creative Writing was not regarded as a proper university subject - either in our own or the English department. But when did the views of an internal department ever stop curriculum development in adult education?

And not so long ago, English Literature was itself a new subject, emerging a long way below the high walls of HE. Since the Newbolt report (1922) placed the study of English Literature at the centre of state educational provision at every level, its claims have been so universally attended to as to seem like common-sense. But English Literature has always been a key site for the formation, dissemination and contestation of many kinds of knowledge, meaning and value. Contemporary social debate continues to be mediated through the terms of English Literature - Englishness, the crisis

of cultural meaning and artistic value, issues of national and individual identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, national decline and so on. Not surprisingly then, English Literature has proved to be one of the most secure points of entry into the professions in post-War Britain. Even today, when this is rather less secure, demand for places to study English at undergraduate level has never been higher. Among Access and part-time degree students in particular, it remains the most important - and problematic - route into higher education.

For at the same time, the divisions between the popular experience and enjoyment of literature and the study of English as an undergraduate subject have grown ever deeper. Originally defined by levels of literacy and education, these divisions have not only withstood mass-literacy, but they have significantly deepened in the face of the rise in the reading public. English Literature dances on the grave of the author, while British literary culture is increasingly preoccupied with prize-winning writers, literary biographers and literary biographies. The entrance of Literature into new social constituencies has not, on the whole, been reflected in the practice of English in HE institutions - the commercial revival of new fiction, the rise of literary festivals, writers in residence, readers in residence, television adaptation, community publishing, the dramatic expansion of the writing movement and the development of poetry as an adjunct to alternative cabaret and comedy.

This reflects the increasing marginalisation of HE institutions in society, bit players now in the knowledge-society. But it is also a consequence of the further, wilful isolation of Literature inside the walls of HE. As a new generation of working-class adults study English in HE through Access courses and part-time degrees, they are required to leave behind much of their own experience - of reading, of class, race and gender - by a critical discourse which announces the equality of all discourses. In the old universities at least, literature is rarely related to the world of reading, to issues of creativity or to work in the cultural industries.

Meanwhile, since replacing Economics and International Relations as the most popular subject in adult education, English Literature has become the bearer of many of the weaknesses and strengths of post-War adult education. Uncritically reproducing a sense of literary value agreed elsewhere, and two steps behind TV, the literary prize givings and the movement of the paperback market, English Literature in adult education has often become an intellectual safe haven for students - and tutors - characterised by deference to the text and to the author, and a notable absence of theory.

Much of the energy of the subject in adult education - the serious study of reading, writing and criticism - has been relocated outside the ghetto of Literature itself, in other new and overlapping subjects: in women's studies, cultural studies, family history, community history and - most recently - in creative writing. Addressing the popular experience of reading and writing, acknowledging the importance of both experience and theory, embracing creativity and understanding the role of the cultural industries - this has been an important autonomous space, connecting students to the many different levels at which Literature exists in society. English literature is no longer a sufficient description of itself, an adequate subject able to contain its own energies.

In particular, there is at present a very extensive creative writing movement in Britain, usually developing a long way from the institution of higher education, and often in opposition to their idea of English Literature. At the very least, it has been an alternative site for the development of ideas about literature, creativity and experience, and has recently acted as a pressure point for change in English literature in higher education, teacher training and schools. Where creative writing has developed within higher education, it has almost always been within the elitist assumptions of the institution.

In Cleveland, the creative writing movement emerged from the WEA and university adult education. But it has always been much more than this. Its strength lies well beyond the limits of adult education institutions - in writers groups, community publications, libraries, community arts, readings, schools, small presses and in Cleveland's annual community writing festival, Writearound. This activity represent the beginnings of a native literary culture in Cleveland. But it is a long way from Literature as it is taught in higher education, constituting a much wider educational, cultural and political project.

And this distance from higher education, even from adult education, has always been its greatest asset, an educational space not defined by educational priorities, a literary culture defined from pressure from 'below' - a collective, diverse, democratic, amateur, and fiercely local working-class literary culture.

The victory march of accreditation will, of course, bring its own rather different ideas about creative writing. As adult education enters the mainstream, new pressures from 'above' will inevitably challenge the relative autonomy of creative writing as a developing subject and oblige it to enter HE institutions who are not known for their sympathy for this kind of work, but who will nevertheless dictate the terms of entry.

The issue of assessment will be crucial here. This is not just a technical question: for many, any form of assessment will seem entirely antagonistic to the spirit of their writing, and threatening to the often highly collective spirit in which they work. The inevitable professionalisation of the subject risks alienating the existing socio-economic constituency, as amateur writers are turned into students and their needs and aspirations come into conflict with the imperatives of accreditation and progression out of, rather than within, their subject. At a crucial moment in the early development of creative writing as a subject, colonisation by HE threatens to freeze the curriculum. Above all, for those who do not see their writing as an educational activity at all, mainstreaming will dispossess them of a complex and enjoyable area of their lives.

Creative writing will no doubt continue to develop within the culture of HE. But without the defining pressures from outside the walls, from adult education and beyond, there is every reason to think it will atrophy like English Literature. We began with a concern that the new order would damage adult education by disenfranchising our student body and limiting our flexibility to take initiatives in teaching, learning and research. However, we conclude that however great our loss, the loss to the university, of such important developmental space, will be as great. In the absence of adult education to keep open the lines between itself and a socially conscious, responsive community, who is going to provide the university's critiques and transformations? There is no point in pulling down walls if there is no life to be seen beyond the ruins.

Notes

We are grateful to our colleagues Malcolm Chase and Barry Harrison for discussions of earlier drafts of this paper.

[1] For more detailed accounts of this aspect of adult education's history, see Ward, K. & Taylor, R (1986), *Adult Education and the Working Class* , and Steele, T. (1994) University Adult Education: Renewing the Vocation, *Adults Learning* Vol 5 No 9.

[2] When Women Studies became established in adult education, it was centred in Access & Community Education and might more accurately be described as women's education. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened had its initial appeal to middle-class professional women been developed through continuing professional education instead.

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Managerialism, change and democratic accountability

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Over the past fifteen years, local government has been subject to over 150 pieces of legislation, a large proportion of which has reduced the powers of local councils in planning and delivering their services. Parts of the legislation have forced the councils to tender their services with the assumption that the lowest tender should be acceptable. Basically, local government is expected to provide better services for less money, contract out services, and monitor contracted out services for effectiveness and efficiency. Additionally, it has to work in partnership with the voluntary and private sectors, and to compete for a range of resources to support the local economic infrastructure as well as community initiatives.

Senior management have recognised the need for change and in numerous cases the starting point for change has been management development. These range from strategic initiatives to piecemeal development of senior managers. Often, customised management courses in partnership with local universities have been negotiated. In other cases trainers from external organisations have been employed to deliver the training. It is the latter that I shall examine, to discuss the various issues, including those of values for both the trainer and the organisation.

I am at present hired as a trainer by a large council which has embarked on various continuing education initiatives which range from in-house training for frontline staff, supervisors, and managers to various specialised training related to IT and social work. The organisation has committed itself to change, and is attempting to be more responsive, through the services it offers, to the community, in light of the changing role imposed by legislation, together with the perceptions of the community tax payer. The council has committed itself to becoming an Investor in People (IIP) organisation which is its strategic linchpin in the transformation of the organisation. The council also has a written Equal Opportunities policies which clearly states that it will take positive action to overcome barriers to career development for women and Black staff. In addition the council is being subjected to the Local Government Review. This Review may result in the organisation being split into various Unitary Bodies with shared or devolved responsibilities.

The training project involves supporting twelve Black[1] managers to attain competences at NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) Level 4 management standards. The project was funded because the council recognised that its management of change training projects excluded Black managers. To redress this imbalance, the council released funds to encourage the development of Black managers from different departments of the council. The first stage of the project identified the training needs of these twelve trainees by matching the existing competences to national standards and then identifying gaps; this provided the information required for Personal Contracts which outlined the training required to develop the relevant competences. In developing competences related to NVQs the trainees have to collect evidence to demonstrate their competences. In this context the trainees have to negotiate certain tasks with their line managers which will enable them to collect evidence.

The Personal Contract also outlines the support that the organisation has to provide. This will mainly come from the trainees' line managers. The line managers not only have to provide support to the trainees by reviewing progress but also through negotiating work objectives and priorities so that trainees have opportunities to conduct tasks as part of their development through which evidence will be generated. The support of line managers is crucial for the trainees as they sanction work and in some cases delegate tasks which allow the trainees to gather evidence through experience.

In this example there is a project approved by the senior management which is not only part of the implementation of its equal opportunities strategy but also their strategy of change. The assumption here is that all the line managers concerned will support the training and development of their Black managers. At the start of the project I arranged a workshop for both the trainees and their line managers to brainstorm how the latter could support the trainees; the outcome was a positive one with most line managers suggesting practical ideas and some stating their commitment.

The project is now in the second stage which is concerned with implementation, and the reality has been very different from what was expected and promised. This has raised issues not just of values but also of democratic accountability because the

performance of the Black manager trainees and their opportunities to develop has a direct bearing on the increase in effectiveness of the delivery of quality and equality in the provision of services. An example of this involves one of the Black managers who is a Youth Centre Leader. His job involves not just being the manager of the centre but also being responsible for the provision offered to the youths who use the centre. The Black manager is employed by the council but the centre is a voluntary organisation funded by the council, with a management committee which oversees the running of the centre. The Black manager reports to the committee and is also managed by a senior manager from the council (this type of arrangement is common in local authorities funding youth work). In a recent review conducted by the council, it was suggested that the management committee could be strengthened with wider representation from the local community. The Black manager started a process of consultations with members of the local Black community as they were under represented on the management committee. This has very little support from the line manager who believes that this will take up a lot of the Black manager's time. Moreover, the representatives would require training for which there is no budget.

In a second situation with the same Black manager, two sessional youth workers had to be appointed for working with users who have disabilities. The Black manager hoped to advertise for these posts in the local press, whereas the line manager wanted to appoint a youth worker that he personally knew and worked with before. In a third situation the Black manager was in the process of producing a six month Personal Action Plan. For this he required support from his line manager who was reluctant to commit himself. The reason was that the funding for the youth centre was not secure and there might be cuts in funding which could result in a change in the objectives. That is, it could be a waste of effort producing an Action Plan which would be inapplicable within a short period of time. In all these three cases the Black manager was required to conduct these tasks in order to collect the evidence.

Another Black manager, who represents the council on voluntary organisations decided that the implementation of *Care in the Community* provided an opportunity to develop certain consultative processes in the area of care between the council and the voluntary sector, and the outcome would be used as evidence to demonstrate competence. The development of the new processes required the support of the line manager as a committee paper had to be produced which requires the signature of the line manager before it can be discussed by the relevant council committee. At the initial stage of development the line manager provided support but this started to wane as the nature of this development changed. The voluntary organisations said that as they were supposedly equal partners, they should have an equal say in the policy making process; in addition they also felt that not enough consultations had been conducted which took into account the availability of representatives from their sector. This required both the Black manager and his line manager to re-evaluate their original idea of developing a new consultative process and while the Black manager was keen to take on board the views of the voluntary sector, the line manager took the view that this was too costly in terms of time and effort, and that the council was not in business to empower those outside the organisation so that they could direct the council on how to deliver services.

In both above cases the line managers, while recognising that the project has been initiated by the council, have provided very little or no support. The reasons for this are varied but in both cases they undermine the Black managers' opportunities and abilities to make the service more accountable to the community. In the first case the representatives from the local community are not encouraged to have a say in the services as the process would be time consuming and they would require training. Likewise in the second case the line manager is reluctant to support the development of new processes of consultation because they would take time, but more than that, they would directing the council's polices and the direction of service delivery.

In discussing these issues with the Black managers as part of their training programme, I found that both were reluctant to pursue this matter further as they are already under pressure to deliver the existing service; development could not be prioritised. Initially both felt that the reasons outlined by their respective line managers were technical, that is, a matter of resources and time. But in later discussions they felt that the line managers were not keen on consulting with the communities as their view was that that these groups did not quite understand the pressures of delivering a service. In addition, one of the line managers felt that service made available to the different communities was at the same level and quality, that is, there were no barriers facing any of the communities, hence there was no need to develop the consultative process.

By not supporting the Black managers in their trainee role in their endeavours to make the council more responsive, the line managers appear to be operating on a different value system to those

behind the training programme. As an external trainer, I was committed to the set of values that informed the management training programme that was being used to enhance the development of the Black manager trainees and, hoped to make the council more responsive in certain areas of service delivery.

In order to elaborate further, some of the values held about local government are that it should encourage the community it serves to participate in the decision making process, and this process should be reviewed as conditions change. Linked to this is that councils should allow the communities to protest and apply pressure for their needs to be met; the communities should be in a position to guide the direction of the services. A third relevant value is that local government respect the diversity that exist within the communities it serves. These values are concerned with the democratic accountability of local government. It must be stressed that these values relate to political beliefs. Given the policies of the present Central Government, local government is more or less restrained to carry out all those it feels are necessary to meet the needs of the community it serves. These needs vary from one part of the country to another. However, given the restraint, local government must still attempt to respond to the needs of the local population it serves. Observing these values being ignored by my clients has raised some problems.

Councils need to change in order to respond to the changing circumstances which they find themselves in. Here, as there has been resistance to change, problems arise. Change is complex, and compounded by race, gender and class divisions. In this case, Black manager trainees (one female and the other a male) are not being allowed to manage change; for one of the trainees, *'black people may be employed as managers but are not usually allowed to manage'*. The council has an equal opportunities policy. The reason for this is that it has made a claim to be democratically accountable to the community it serves and this has resulted in Black managers being appointed. However, they are not being allowed to articulate their creativity and talent, thereby in this context not being accountable to the community the Council serves. There is no doubt that the line managers are under pressure to deliver the existing services of the Council, but having accepted that they would support the Black managers on their training programme, they have so far failed to keep up with this agreement. In discussions with the two line managers it became obvious that their view of the supposed change as instigated by the Black managers was seen to be unrealistic because the community was not always aware how the Council operated, and the pressures it was under; discussions on the nature of the Council's accountability to its community were considered 'academic' by one, and a 'luxury' by the other. Furthermore, developing further the consultative process would only provide the community with an opportunity to make unrealistic demands which the council could not fulfil. When I raised the possibility of using the Black managers' initiative as an opportunity to make the community organisations more aware of the pressures the Council faced, this was rejected as the time and effort would be too much, and it was 'debatable' whether this was achievable.

The outcome to date has been that both Black managers are pursuing these initiatives in their own time, that is, they have to conduct work which is 'legitimate' insofar as it is approved by their line managers, and developmental work, which they conduct when they find the time. The result has been that there was an enormous amount of pressure on these two Black managers.

In the first case outlined above the Black manager is still canvassing for representatives and has produced a draft Action Plan, parts of which are incomplete because they require the line manager's support. The two sessional youth workers have not been employed, thereby depriving clients with disabilities of a service. In the second case the Black manager has abandoned the idea for the time being of developing the consultative process. For both Black managers, this has resulted in additional work, and this has also made their professional development difficult.

Does the forced change in local government mean that it is no longer accountable to the community it serves anymore? The past fifteen years has become a test for communities and local government alike in articulating values that each hold. Often the instigator of the attempted shift in values, the State, is ignored. The fact that local government has to follow the market based legislation of the present Government does not mean that they have to abandon their commitment to a distinctive set of values; they may have to deliver services differently, but nonetheless values do not have to be ignored. For example, in the first case above the line manager could in my view have supported the trainees in preparing the Action Plan. Through this they could have discussed the values that each hold, and produced the document accordingly. While the forced change in the public sector has made them think about being more effective with a reduction in resources, it has also increased the strength of the managerial class. This has resulted in cases where senior managers have ignored the values that should go with delivering services to the communities they serve, as local government is

still part of the 'democratic process'; after all, councillors are elected to run the councils.

Trainers within continuing education employed to deliver specific aspects of the management of change must be aware of context in which they operate. The whole of the public sector has undergone dramatic change over the last decade, and along with this have come different methods of delivering services which has resulted in new training to be delivered. For those delivering training, the underlying values which are important for serving the community should not be ignored and they should form an integral part of any training course, but this is not always as straightforward as it might first appear.

Note

[1] Black here denotes African, Afro-Caribbean and Asian

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The rise of managerialism at the expense of academic creativity and innovative development?

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Introduction

Sir Keith Joseph whether as politician or as a would-be philosopher, certainly reversed the conventional order of things in which university dons were supposed to talk about philosophy and governments were supposed to talk about resources. In his address to the British academy in July 1984 (cited by Birley, 1988; p. 20), he emphasised that the best way for institutions to ensure their freedom was to become financially independent. Thus the scene was set for evolutionary transition and revolutionary transformation (Wilson, 1982; p. 20) of higher education which involves not simply its restructuring but also a re-evaluation of its aims and social worth (Wright, 1988; p. 183).

The ideological standing of the academy is being challenged. Seventeen reforms in fifteen years has resulted in a drastic upheaval in the education service. Neither its basic assumptions nor its definitions of educational needs and how they should be met, are any longer unquestioningly accepted by the wider society (Barnett, 1985). Although many of the effects have been widely debated and documented, the impact of the reforms on power, responsibility and accountability have not been addressed to the same degree.

The Jarratt Report (1985) recommended a general tightening up of internal management of universities, including an enhanced role for university councils (but not senates), the creation or strengthening of planning and resource committees, the introduction of systems of performance indicators and a variety of new formal controls, especially in relation to finance. The recommendation that universities should recognise the Vice Chancellor not only as an academic leader but also as a chief executive has set the scene for the rise of managerialism in higher education, the result being a shift of emphasis in priorities away from academic to business concerns. This ethos is permeating the whole academic community (Sizer, 1988; p. 87).

Watson (1994; p. 24) argues that the culture of higher education is now replete with ambiguity, unresolved tensions, paradoxes and contradictory purposes. Nonetheless, from this complexity arises creativity, energy and an almost indefinable sense of collective purpose. The culture does, however, makes goals difficult to agree and progress notoriously hard to measure.

This paper focuses on these authors' personal role enactment experiences, within a faculty of health and social work. Taking an autobiographical approach the authors will illustrate the rise of managerialism and its impact upon academic creativity and innovative development. Perspectives are compared and contrasted and some emerging issues are debated critically.

Autobiography of Role Experiences within a Faculty of Health and Social Work

The Faculty operates not only against the backcloth of changes in the higher education sector but also those of the National Health Service. With the wave of Conservative reforms continued under the Major administration from 1990, four main elements emerged: a bolder market-like mechanism; intensified organisational and spatial decentralisation of management; a constant rhetorical emphasis on the need to improve 'quality'; and an equally relentless insistence that greater attention had to be given to the wishes of the 'consumer' (Pollitt, 1993; p. 180). The notion that competition would oblige educational providers to raise quality when the definition of the term is not at all straightforward has triggered some cause for concern and, specifically, debates about the relative value of management and organisation over academia.

It is against this backcloth that the authors enact their roles within an expanding and diversifying faculty. The roles are at once within themselves and in the organisation, in inherent conflict. This is the reality of our day to day organisational lives. The roles described are both pluralist in nature in that they combine distinctive cultural forms each of which, in essence, have equal but different power and authority. The predominantly academic role has little authoritative but considerable influential power whilst the head of department role holds, in principle, authoritative power and control.

In the following autobiographies, the management/ academic creativity dilemma is illuminated thus establishing a basis for debate.

Head of Department

I believe that the main aspects of my role are academic and professional leadership, resource management (human, financial and material) and to act as a representative for the faculty and for the university. I see myself as a role model for staff, a source of advice and a powerful unit of resource. I am experiencing conflict in my role enactment as I have become swamped with the administrative aspects of my role which have severely restricted my opportunity for academic creativity and innovation. This does not seem to give me time to spend on the leadership aspect which I believe is more important. I am spending hours in front of a computer, pouring over budget statements, pursuing number crunching exercises which restrict my ability to focus upon the pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning and research. My role is designated as being primarily concerned with effective and efficient management of resources and academic leadership is a secondary function. This is in conflict with my own expectations and those of my own staff and some of my peers within the university community.

I lack time to devote to staff development in order to effectively mobilise over 70 staff members to enact their roles in this new educational culture. Another major source of conflict is my perceived distancing from practice which is essential to my academic and professional function. I am expected, professionally, to maintain practice credibility which I am failing to achieve.

The contract culture demands that I maintain an open network with our purchasers and sets arbitrary standards of performance, exacerbating the complexity of educational delivery on multi-sites which stretches precious resources to the limit. The emerging thrust of my role within a consumer-led educational culture is placing the purchasers as a priority because this is geared to survival and financial solvency, even to making a profit. Thus the nature of the role is no longer primarily academic but one of a business entrepreneur who has to exist and prosper in an enterprise culture.

Director of Academic Design and Development

My role was created in 1992 having emerged from the need to assure quality of academic design and to give academic direction within a very diverse organisation. This in effect lifted, to some extent, role responsibility for academic leadership out of heads of departments.

I am primarily responsible for faculty academic design and development including achieving excellence in teaching, learning and assessing.

I function within a system that is controlled by a Dean who has primarily an executive role and who looks to me for academic direction. Thus I have a position of influence but no authoritative power. I have opportunities to be creative and innovative but am severely restricted by the lack of supporting resources.

There is a subtle shift from generating excellence to generating income. The two do not make harmonious bedfellows for they introduce an imperative to search for funds and to justify one's existence in a role hierarchy. The pressure to generate income will, in effect, divert attention away from my primary goal of achieving excellence. In addition, key functions such as teaching, supervising research dissertations and my practice credibility will diminish as the search for income restricts my time.

The market imperative impacts upon the nature of design and academic affairs. The rise in consumerism and managerialism presents me with a paradox and gives me some concern about the marginalisation of academia, which in turn, forces me into the role of resource manager and entrepreneur.

Existing in a world full of paradoxes, conflicting ideologies and values.

In analysing our role enactment experience a set of paradoxes emerge which are not comfortable or easy to live with, for as Handy (1994 cited in Aspen, 1994; p. 21) suggests

> 'It can be like walking in a dark wood on a moonless night. It is eerie and at times a frightening experience.'

One of these paradoxes concerns managerialism. As Pollitt (1993; p. 1) argues, this can viewed from three quite different stances. From one standpoint, managerialism is a set of beliefs and practices, specifically, that the achievement of continuing education increases in economically defined productivity; that management is a separate and distinct organisational function and one that plays a crucial role in planning, implementing and measuring the necessary improvements in productivity.

These beliefs are often couched in such terms of generality that they are often taken for granted as truths and as such are seldom subjected to critical debate. The absence of such debate means academic creativity can be stifled and controlled. In an academic institution such debate should be commonplace, therefore, to counter this restriction, and make living with the paradox more comfortable, I, in my role as academic leader, have established a forum, which is situated outside the management structure, and offers opportunities for

critical debate and free thinking not confined within an agenda.

Whilst managerialism can be accused of frugality, if one takes a post-modern view of it (Clegg, 1992; p. 1), management can, as Pollitt (1993) suggests, through clear-sighted leadership achieve fundamental changes and give a new sense of purpose and achievement. The notion of the post-modern manager, for example, theoretical sophistication, ability to deal with adversity, reflectivity and humility, fits neatly into the ethos of the academic framework. These are skills of critical reflection which foster creativity, thinking beyond immediate crises and number crunching to the deeper meanings.

In the context of a limited vocabulary of managerialism, however, which focuses on 'targets', 'action plans', 'cost improvements' 'income generation opportunities' and which reflects an out-moded notion of management, we would argue that academic creativity will be suppressed. In addition, an approach such as this, which makes little reference to motivational or cognitive processes, 'human relations' are typically reduced to vague references to 'leadership' and 'initiative' argues Pollitt (1993; p. 85). He claims that 'Everywhere the hierarchy of 'line management' is said to need strengthening - presumably against the forces of organisational pluralism and professional autonomy.' As academic creativity and abstract thinking processes are a part of professional autonomy and flourish in organisational pluralism, particularly in organisations willing to take risks and sanction mistakes, the notion of bureaucratic managerialism does not sit comfortably. How does one measure and put a price on intellectual activity? We have no immediate answer to this particular paradox.

An emerging issue from managerialism is the exertion of power and control which presents another paradox for, as Stacey (1993; p.274) argues, the continuous use of power as authority, clearly discourages intuitive initiative. The use of power, however, as influence may be beneficial in stimulating academic development and even entrepreneurial activity. My (department head) response to this paradox is to use skilful alteration and discretionary power in order to stimulate rather than stifle academic creativity and innovation.

A paradox which causes certain discomfort to both head of department and academic leader roles is the rising consumerism. The market is dictating the nature and amount of educational products which from one perspective demands innovation in educational design to meet the requirements for flexibility and relevance, but in another restricts academic creativity. The latter is controlled by the purchasing contract which ensures that more imaginative and creative programmes designed to meet other than skills based human need, are eliminated. Consumerism does not allow for academic creativity.

Conclusion

Within a post-modern era it is becoming apparent that organisations have to be peopled by those who are capable of dealing with the fast, the fleeting and the fickle (Peters, 1992 - cited by Aspen 1994; p. 21) to survive. Nevertheless, managers and academics have to survive within an increasingly complex set of paradoxes, some of which have been presented here.

We have argued that a bureaucratic approach to management which seeks to control rather than inspire will not engender a culture which fosters academic growth and creativity. Flexibility of thinking and imaginative leaps within a context of rapid change are required for successful management which is dependent on people skills, fresh thinking, dealing with change and realising that there are no certainties to which to cling. Managers have to re-define and re-invent themselves and their enterprises day by day to be effective.

If the nature of managerialism is one which reflects a post-modern perspective then academic creativity and innovation will not only survive but be valued. However, if the current ethos of bureaucratic management control continues, academic creativity will decline and eventually die.

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The limitations of theory

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How does research relate to practice? What sort of research into the education of adults is most needed? At a time of expanding provision questions such as these seem peculiarly pressing.

This paper considers one exploration of some of the issues raised here: Robin Usher's 'Experience in Adult Education: a post-modern critique' (Usher, 1992). Usher works through some of the major theoretical issues which emerge from the literature towards an enlightened and non-doctrinaire position. Let me first briefly summarise his paper.

Usher begins by addressing the rich but complex notion of experience. He identifies this as a defining characteristic of adults. Whereas experience is a point of difference between the teacher and the school child, it is something which the teacher and the adult student have in common. This grounds a conception of education which is democratic and egalitarian in spirit.

In this vein Usher urges that the experience of the learner be allotted its due importance. Anyone who has taught adults is likely to recognise the ways in which experience may inform their studies enabling them to bring to new subject matter a fresh perspective in a way which usually is beyond the younger student. Usher goes so far as to see this experience as of equal importance to the subject knowledge of teachers.

Having defined adult education by way of experience, Usher's strategy is to consider two rival theories which, he suggests, reflect a binary opposition which has developed in the study of adult education. The first of these is individualistic humanism, the second critical pedagogy. Individualistic humanism is typified by its context-free and abstract conception of the individual. Its supreme educational aim of autonomy is characterised in terms of a freedom from constraints. Critical pedagogy in contrast places much emphasis on the socially determined nature of experience. It seeks to bring about group empowerment through raised consciousness and collective responsibility.

While both perspectives offer valuable insights and have directed adult education in important ways, Usher identifies limitations in each. Usher's main purpose then is to offer a way beyond this binary opposition and this he seeks to do via post-modernism. From post-modernism he draws four main insights: first, the learner's historical and social situatedness, as exemplified in Heidegger's conception of being-in-the-world; second, the power relations in the linguistic background to the learner's situation, as explored by Foucault; third, the openness of meaning, expressed and exemplified in Derrida; fourth, the necessarily relational nature of the subject, its identity inscribed by others and by the otherness of the symbolic order, as recognised by Lacan. These are seen as ways of dismantling the humanistic conception of the independent subject.

In the light of the reorientation which these ideas provide, Usher considers an idea from within educational theory - that of Donald Schon's reflective practitioner. Here the idea is of reflection not just *on* but *in* practice.

Finally Usher reasserts adult education's role in disrupting the given. The preceding arguments from critical pedagogy and post-modernism lead to the claim that in adult education there are no fixed meanings. Hence the commitment to oppose received meanings is more securely grounded. But the arguments have also led in new directions and dismantled any received theories. In the light of them, Usher suggests, there is a need for new *theory*.

I am sympathetic to the direction of Usher's argument but unconvinced by the theoretical weight and the tidiness of the conclusions. Usher's paper is such that criticisms of it can be focused on issues which are broadly significant for adult education. My discussion will address issues of definition, experience, and theorisation.

Usher begins with a definitional approach: a distinguishing feature of adults is their experience. There are occasions when it might be salutary to remind someone of this. New adult teachers whose conception of adult education is shaped (unthinkingly?) by their experience of school will need to lose certain preconceptions and to think afresh about the people they are going to teach. (Many thinking teachers would do this anyway.) But it is not clear that much can be drawn in general from Usher's observation. In the first place its terms are vague. 'Experience' is peculiarly context-relative and its subtle connections with learning require exploration through examples. When adulthood for education begins is unclear. More important than such arbitrary limits, however, is the way in which such an approach

encourages a quantitative conception of experience. What people have gone through does affect what they bring to education and, in some cases, how they should be taught. Certain experiences can put a wise head on young shoulders; some experience over-protects and cossets; some brutalises. These qualitative points should be important to an educator, whether of adults or of children. Because of the quantity of an adult's experience, they are more likely to be significant in the case of adults. It is difficult to see, however, that very much of a general kind could be made of this.

'Adults,' Usher suggests, 'have the means to question their being,' (ibid; p. 204) but if this is a distinguishing criterion it is arguable that adolescence is the turning point. The substantive reasons for this might begin to show *how* experience is relevant.

Usher claims that the adult learner's experience is equal in value to the subject knowledge of the teacher. The idea of equality presupposes commensurability and it is difficult to see how that can apply here. A distinction *can* be drawn between subjects where the experience of the student is peculiarly relevant - such as literature, perhaps - and those where this is less so - say, word-processing or physics. Furthermore, there are courses where the experience of the learner *is* the subject matter and where the 'subject' knowledge of the teacher fades almost into insignificance - for example, personal profiling. But in general if experience is identified as a defining characteristic of adults, it remains to be shown *why* this is significant for adult education - as opposed, for example, to adult medicine. The preceding considerations (regarding certain subjects) suggest a way that this might be done.

There is a running ambiguity, not peculiar to this text, in the term 'adult education'. This can refer to the theoretical study of adult education in, for example, universities, or to the wide-ranging practice of adult education. By his sensitive remarks on the ways in which the theorist - even, ironically, in critical pedagogy - can become locked into a discourse which reinforces power relations, it is apparent that Usher's concern is to reach out to adult education in the broad sense. But when he refers, for example, to adult education's 'own history as an oppositional discourse' (ibid; p. 213) the sense is less clear.

There is a deeper reservation about definition, however, which can be outlined in Wittgensteinian terms. Wittgenstein sees limitations in certain attempts to understand things in terms of their defining characteristics. This is closely related to our common mistake of losing sight of the context-dependent nature of terms and our assumption that there must be a direct correspondence between a term and a particular type of entity. This is famously brought out in his frequent use of the analogy of games (Wittgenstein, 1978, pp. 66 ff.). The idea of a game is a perfectly serviceable one and yet there is no single definition which seems adequately to apply to the diversity of games played. Tiddly-winks, boxing, cricket, patience, cops-and-robbers, badminton, and bungy-jumping have little in common.

Wittgenstein is making a fundamental point about the nature of language but its particular significance for present purposes can be seen if we consider the astonishing variety of adult education. The short course in word processing, the evening class in French, the part-time or full-time degree course, the art appreciation trip to Florence, welding, return-to-learn, literacy, counselling skills - this variety of provision is further complicated by the diversity of the institutions which provide courses, of the modes of study, and of the students and their motives for participating. Definition of this kind then seems like a systematising step which theory takes away from practice. But we are motivated to make such generalisations by the mistaken assumption that the applicability of the term 'adult education' must indicate essential characteristics - as if peering ever more closely at the term will reveal its true nature. If there *are* common characteristics, they may not be very significant ones.

Of course, it is possible to agonise over such matters as what is to count as *adult* education. Sometimes it may be appropriate to use a stipulative definition but for our ordinary purposes the concept with its uncertain limits is in order as it is. A country with a border dispute is still a country.

Usher plausibly identifies the dominant tradition in adult education as one of individual humanism in which (a somewhat 'thin' conception of) autonomy is a central aim. Whether this outlook is widely held by practitioners is questionable though it would perhaps receive tacit support. Theory on this grand scale, however, may not be edifying in relation to such a diversity of practice: the wide range of teaching carried out in adult education makes the relevance of any unifying theory dubious. This casts light also on the applicability of critical pedagogy. There are contexts where critical pedagogy is apt. To accept it as a general account of adult education, however, flies in the face of that variety and situatedness which has been sketched above.

Such accounts survive all the more successfully where they appear in a stark polarity: the rival theories need each other. Similarly the view of adult education as an oppositional discourse thrives on the creation of a grossly oversimplified picture

of other aspects of educational provision - for example, of schools as rigidly didactic.

Given the limitations of these rival accounts, Usher rightly sees post-modernist discourse concerning the situated subject as opening a way beyond. The reservation here is whether in the fleeting glimpses of different writers too much is being run together. Usher sees the picture which emerges as a means of disrupting the given notions of adult education. Yet post-modernism is not always thought subversive: it has become a familiar criticism that it may rationalise conservatism or relax in a 'promiscuous cool'.

Post-modernism deflates grand narratives and repudiates foundationalism, contesting the relationship between theory and practice. Usher's reading here is an over-reaction: the relativising tendencies of post-modernism do not warrant the conclusion that in adult education 'there are no fixed meanings' (ibid; p. 210) or that the alternative to the autonomous subject must be a thorough-going determinism. He acknowledges the dangers of totalising conceptions of meaning but this caution is not always evident in his thesis that the prospects for improved practice are dependent on better theory.

This seems to be a plea for a raising of consciousness, an idea which Usher works out in terms of Schon's reflective practitioner. In many ways this veers away from post-modernism, especially where authenticity has been evoked in terms of Carl Rogers' 'organismic' and essential self. In many ways this must be the sort of thing which many teachers want to achieve. But there are reasons for questioning the way this is put. In the idea of reflection there is a self-consciousness partially at odds with the implications of situatedness and the background - ideas richly suggestive of that being-in-the-world which Usher has built into his argument. This prevents Usher from allowing, or at least accounting adequately, for the value of adult education provision which gives learners understanding in aspects of their culture or which otherwise involves them in its practices. Such an education is not helpfully described as a disruption of the given. In its conserving of practices, on the contrary, it may offer a basis for the genesis of a thoughtfully critical response.

Usher's own commitment to theory connects with his rejection of the idea that practice is 'improved' through the use of more effective techniques. Finding a new theory involves locating oneself in a different discourse. Such a theory will locate the space within which a resistance to dominant meanings can continue to emerge. In this process adult education may need to remain marginal, to resist the inclination to impose, and to forego its claims to power and status.

The seductive formal appeal of theory, however, can offer a false unity where there is diversity. There can be a compulsion to theorise, augmented by the institutionalising of a subject, and this can jeopardise attention to the particular case, to that variety which post-modernism might otherwise celebrate.

To recognise this is not to counsel despair. Rather it points to the style of research which is needed. The critique of definition suggests the value of a more descriptive approach directed towards limited segments of adult education. In this the laying of related cases alongside one another - and, more broadly, comparative studies - will play an important part. The complex questions relating to experience should be raised but anchored in clear and realistic examples. In addressing such questions adult education need not be marginal for it enters into the biggest questions in ethics and epistemology and into those related questions of language, the background, and the self, all of which should be the concern of education. Current expansion in adult education provides an interesting focus for such enquiry. The tendency, however, to talk about adult education in a systematic way - at once hived off from broader educational enquiry and insufficiently attentive to its own diversity - runs the risk of distortion.

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The changing role of the professional in university continuing education

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A central aspect of the 'Great Tradition' in university adult education was the role of the itinerant extramural subject tutor, bringing enlightenment in literature, history or whatever, to the darker corners of Britain. Thompson, Williams, Hoggart - the great names of the extramural tradition - acted as role models for generations of adult educators, and indeed wider constituencies of radical intellectuals. And these were great, radical men: their influence on British intellectual life and on radical thought has been, and continues to be, profound. As John McIlroy has demonstrated in his excellent work on Williams[1], and as Hoggart's autobiography reveals, the culture and ambience of their university adult education experiences were absolutely central to their social, political, and intellectual development. Many other lesser men and women have followed in their footsteps and the radical, democratic, participative social purpose adult education of the post-war period has been a continuing and major strand within University Adult Continuing Education through to the present day.[2]

This tradition thus had much to commend it. The rationale can be simply stated. If the mission of the extramural department was to disseminate the values, the knowledge, and the excellence of academy to the wider adult population (or at least a segment of it), then the full-time academic role was that of subject specialist and adult pedagogue. This raised issues, of course, of comparability with academics in subject departments, particularly in terms of perceived academic status and actual research: hence, for example, at Leeds Sidney Raybould's elitist predisposition for recruiting exclusively Oxbridge graduates to the Department. Administration was to be left firmly to the professional administrators, and 'policy' to the Director. The professional role of the academic was to teach his (and it was overwhelmingly a male presence) subject and to engage in research. The norm was 4 or 5 classes each year (usually 24 week tutorial or extension classes) and maybe some summer school teaching: the rest of the time was available for research, contemplation, or other intellectual activity. (It is interesting to note, incidentally, that despite Thompson's demonstrable commitment to high quality teaching and what we would now call innovative curriculum development, and his world-class research activity, he still had the opportunity to devote a large amount of time to the Communist Party, the peace movement and related political work.) These were the halcyon days of the (radical) gentleman scholar!

Just to delineate this world is enough to demonstrate how remote it is from the context of University Continuing Education - or indeed universities generally - in the 1990s. What are the main elements of change in the professional roles of University CE practitioners? The wider context is crucially important of course. The pernicious ideology of Thatcherism, the cuts of the 1980s, the development of CVE in a general climate of increasing vocationalism in HE, and above all the increasing 'mainstreaming' of CE as we move falteringly and incoherently to a mass HE system, have been the major elements in this context.

How then has the professional CE role changed? For a start, everyone now has to work very much harder: the pressures are intense and the range of skills required, wider. The subject specialist teaching role, even in the old university sector, has diminished markedly. There remain subject specialists of course but in most cases their roles have become concerned with much more than teaching their own classes. With the expansion of university CE programmes, the large bulk of provision has been undertaken by part-time tutors and the full-timer's role is one of programme management and quality assurance. This involves a range of functions: the recruitment, induction, mentoring and staff development of part-time colleagues; curriculum innovation and programme planning; and the administrative and financial work connected with meeting targets for student numbers and fee income.

There is also the vexed question of research. With the onset of the Research Assessment Exercise demonstrable research excellence has become of paramount importance for CE Departments, as for everyone else. There is undeniably tension between the need to establish a critical mass of research in CE, or post-compulsory education more generally, and specialists in CE departments to research in their parent disciplines. Many of the old university CE Departments opted, in the last Research Assessment Exercise, for their research returns to be mainstreamed through the appropriate

subject departments. In theory, research income earned by the university for research in history, biology or whatever but carried out by CE staff, can be calculated and redistributed to the CE Department. In practice, this is most unlikely to occur for obvious political reasons. Even more importantly, such arrangements undermine the fundamental rationale for a separate, dedicated CE Department. If the research can be mainstreamed, why not the delivery? And, even if the delivery function remains with the CE Department, the removal of the research function undermines fatally the case for an academic CE Department. The inevitable outcome is the extra-faculty, service delivery, administrative unit.

If you are committed, as I am, to continuation of an academic CE Department structure, then it seems to me that the development of a research culture and performance in CE is a very high priority. In the end, subject specialists in CE Departments may have to make an uncomfortable choice: do they transform themselves into CE specialists, albeit with ancillary subject-based research interests? (After all, we all started somewhere other than CE!) or is their commitment to their subject paramount, in which case they may eventually have no alternative but to move to an appropriate subject department environment.

In CE, unlike some of the long-established research areas, research publications need to be complemented by professional involvement in policy and 'R and D' areas both in the UK and internationally. Again, this gives an orientation of 'academic administration and management' to the contemporary CE profile.

In summary, then, the CE professional has a contemporary role which includes teaching, but as a minor component, involves a range of administrative and managerial roles, and places an increasing emphasis upon research in CE or post-compulsory education.

The development of CVE, although a part of the continuum of CE, perhaps merits particular discussion within this context, given both its inherently 'mainstreamed' nature and its strong culture of applied, 'real world' CE. It should be noted here, in passing, that the arguments over appropriate CE structures within Universities become particularly acute when CVE is considered. Should CVE be part of a specialist, academic CE Department, or an administrative unit in Registry, or be fully mainstreamed so that all departments at least nationally have a CVE function?

Whichever of these models is adopted, the professional role of the CVE practitioner is essentially, I would argue, the same as for other CE professionals. There may be even less emphasis upon teaching, and correspondingly more on curriculum development, QA and the rest, but these are matters of emphasis not substance. In particular, the research and 'R and D' roles are I think of central importance: if these are not given a high priority then the CVE role is in danger of becoming purely administrative, even reactive. This would be particularly undesirable in the current context of rapid change and the development of WBL, APL, and TEC and Employment Department involvement in CE.

The discussion thus far has been very largely in the context of the old Universities. In most of the new Universities CE has been mainstreamed from the beginning. Part-time adult students are the norm, not the exception, and there is no perceived need for a separate CE Department. Many of the functions of the CE Departments in the old Universities are delivered either through central administrative structures (Access Units and the like) or through the mainstream departmental and faculty structures. (However, many of the CE functions of the Departments in the old Universities have not been carried out, in part because there have been no identified funds allocated. These include pre-eminently liberal adult education; community-based, outreach and off-campus regional CE provision; and CE research.)

The professional CE role in the new Universities has thus been very different. In general, CE professionals designated as such have been fewer in number but more centrally embedded in the institutional culture and structure. They have also generally been of higher status and concerned more with policy and developmental issues which bring together CE and wider institutional mission concerns.

What then of the future in the unified sector, in the context of the CE Review, and the move to a mass higher education system? One thing is certain: there can be no return to the professional CE role of Thompson et al (and more's the pity, in many respects!) Other than that, the future is even harder than usual to predict. Let me conclude with two possible scenarios, one gloomy (by my professional value system), and the other positive.

At one level, the logic of mainstreaming CE within a new mass HE system, which is driven largely by new university culture, assumptions and practices as far as CE is concerned, is for CE as a 'distinctive activity' to disappear. If many more students are to become part-time, adult and locally-based, and if they also attract credit for their CE modules, then CE students and provision - and therefore the associated professional roles - have themselves to become fully mainstreamed. Add to this the increasing emphasis within Universities upon vocationally oriented work, and differentiated

modes of earning (WBL, Distance Learning et al), within a modular structure, and funded through a credit-based system[3], and the case for dissolving CE into the mainstream, rather than simply mainstreaming it, becomes seemingly inevitable. Would this matter? Indeed, if CE concerns really move centre stage, should this 'dissolution' be welcomed? Let me leave this question hanging, until the 'positive' scenario has been outlined.

Given the same consideration of medium-term, systemic developments, it could be argued with equal force that the professional CE role will become even more important than at present. There are, to begin with, several straightforward reasons, in the old Universities at least, why CE expertise and networks are now of central significance for the development of the university: adult pedagogy; inter-disciplinary and more vocationally oriented curriculum development; CATS, WBL and CVE expertise; and the whole range of local network contacts which will facilitate local recruitment. Moreover, as the system moves rapidly to a far more local, home-based student population so the need will increase for a focal point for developing the whole university's part-time strategy (including access and recruitment, QA, mentoring and pastoral care, regional partnership arrangements and so on).

Similarly, the need for both postgraduate CE and post-compulsory education provision will increase, as will the importance of research and 'R and D' in this area. The professional CE role therefore, whilst anchored in an academic CE Department, with research and teaching roles, could become institution-wide. In this projection, there are real possibilities for CE professionals to have an influence at the centre of the university system, mirroring the new university experience, but with an invaluable addition of a solid academic base in a CE Department.

It will be obvious that I favour the second of these projections! In this way I think we can square the circle and use the potentially dangerous process of mainstreaming to strengthen the position of CE within the system. To be sure there are sacrifices: inevitably, there will be less time for full-time staff to teach (though I would argue that we should all retain some teaching contact with adults, and not just with postgraduate CE provision); and there will be a lot of curricular freedom. The end result is a degree of incorporation into what remains, for many of us, an institutional structure which is in ideological terms partially alien. However, this institutional structure is not monolithic and our 'intervention' can adapt and reform HE towards the CE culture.

This is after all analogous to - even part of - an old political argument on the Left. Is it better to retain ideological purity outside the system and sacrifice influence, centrality and power? Or should we rather risk incorporation by working within the system to try to attain a cultural shift towards our perspectives and purposes? I have no doubt of my own answer: and it is within this context that I would argue the future role of the CE professional finds its definition.

Notes

[1] John McIlroy and Sallie Westwood, *Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult Education*, NIACE, 1993, pp 343.

[2] Roger Fieldhouse, *Optimism and Joyful Irreverence: Sixties culture and its influence on British University Adult Education and the WEA in the 1960s*, NIACE, 1993.

[3] David Robertson, *The Report of the HEQC CAT Development Project 'Choosing to Change'*, 1994.

Lost in texts?: the adult education researcher as 'reader' and 'writer'

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The greater involvement in research by practitioners in the field of adult learning, whilst a welcome development, brings with it its own dangers. An uncritical and inappropriate import of approaches, stances and attitudes to research from other fields of social enquiry is one such danger. Another, related to this, is the replication of many of the sterile debates in social science research, for example about whether or not qualitative research is 'better' than quantitative and vice versa. These are essentially second-order questions, as indeed are debates over the kinds of researchable topics and methods which are supposedly most appropriate to the 'nature' of the field of adult learning. Ultimately, the danger is that it is easy to become entangled in these, directing one's critical scrutiny exclusively in their direction. In this paper therefore, I want to argue that there are prior, first-order questions which are to do with contextualising, problematising and reconfiguring the very activity of research itself and it is to these relatively neglected areas that we need to direct our critical scrutiny.

Text

The growing involvement in research is linked to the establishment of an adult learning knowledge-producing community. This is not exactly a Kuhnian knowledge community with a single and settled research paradigm and a single disciplinary matrix (Kuhn 1970). However, the production of any kind of systematic theoretical knowledge (as against informal or craft knowledge) always takes place and indeed requires a community of some sort, no matter how flexible and loosely structured it may be.

Its location in a community is what makes research a *social* practice. One consequence of this is that it is never a matter of researchers 'doing their own thing', although this individualistic conception is a powerful one. Research is a set of activities legitimated by a relevant community where certain activities are judged appropriate and function as criteria for validating knowledge outcomes, whilst others are ruled out of order and excluded. Communities define rules of exclusion, set boundaries and impose closures. This narrows what can be done and what will count as legitimate research, valid knowledge outcomes and 'truth'.

We are all familiar with the notion of a research 'process'. This way of seeing research has a certain heuristic value but it is also very limiting because it makes research seem a mechanistic and algorithmic, step-by-step linear activity. Most significantly, it implies a model where research is both disembedded - an essentially ahistorical, apolitical and *technical* process, a transcendental, contextless set of procedures - and disembodied in the sense of being carried out by isolated, asocial, genderless individuals without a history or culture.

If instead we see research as a social *practice* we are better able to recognise that it is not a universal process of applying a set of general methods or of following an algorithmic procedure. Rather, methods and procedures are themselves a function of the knowledge community's practice whose rules, boundaries and exclusions, no matter how flexible, legitimate and sanction only certain kinds of activity. For example, social and educational research cannot be presented in the form of a literary text. This may seem a wild example but it demonstrates an important point through its very extremeness. If research is a social practice, a practice of producing knowledge that is socially validated, then it is the socially located activity of research that *constructs* a world to be researched. Research can be seen as 'knowledgeing', with the implication that what's going on is not simply a matter of representing, reflecting or reporting a world that already exists. Research therefore does not passively reflect, it actively constructs - but it does so in a particular way.

Now, of course, literature (or 'fictioning') is also a social practice where worlds are created. In this sense, research is just as 'fictional' as literature yet both are equally 'real'. Presenting research in the form of a literary text is just as much creating a world, albeit a very different one, than the presentation of research that follows the linear process model. I'm not saying that research is the *same* as literature but I would say that both are social practices that 'world-make'. Specifically, both are textual practices, world-making through particular ways of 'reading' and 'writing', interpreting and understanding, the world. Research in the field of adult learning is therefore a textual practice but it cannot be presented in the form of a literary text because that is outside the boundaries of what is constituted as acceptable by the knowledge community.

The 'world-making', constructive quality of research can either be denied - as it is, for example, in the positivist/empiricist tradition - or it can be acknowledged. To acknowledge it involves laying bare

the activity of knowledging - 'in our action is our knowing' (Lather 1991:xv) - and foregrounding what is involved in 'world-making'. It is in a sense to *research* the research, to bend the research back upon itself, to ask 'by what practices, strategies and devices is world-making achieved?'. By asking this question, the research act is made self-referential or *reflexive*. This is an activity familiar enough in the analysis of a literary text but the positivist/empiricist tradition that is dominant in the knowledge-producing community of social research conceals it through its own textual practices. Yet since all research, including positivist/empiricist research, is a textual practice and since reflexivity is a function of textuality then any denial of reflexivity misses out an important dimension of the activity of research.

Traditionally, reflexivity has been seen as a 'problem' to be dealt with through 'scientific method'. It is in this way that claims to 'presence', of direct and unmediated knowledge of the world, could supposedly be established. Yet since the activity of knowing is not simply a passive representation of the world and since *how* the world is known influences *what* is known, then presence is itself a function of those activities. In other words, presence is achieved by 'presencing' practices - hence a direct and unmediated knowledge of the world is impossible. The world always comes already interpreted - in other words, as a text.

To foreground the textuality of research and the 'absence' of presence leads immediately to the question 'why do research if you cannot say anything about what is out there and all research is self-reflexive?' (Steier 1991:10). But this is to assume that because the knower is always constitutively part of the activity of knowing then reflexivity is always a *problem*. The alternative, however, is to see it as a *resource* but doing so requires fore-grounding research as a textual, presencing practice rather than a neutral technicist process. Another way of putting this is that reflexivity can be a resource when the place of the active researcher is recognised - 'why do research for which you must deny responsibility for what *you* [i.e. the researcher] have found?' (Steier *ibid*). Yet we are hesitant about doing this since it seems to make research merely into a subtle form of writing the self; a different, non-literary way of writing one's autobiography?

I want to argue that as researchers we need to be reflexive by subjecting ourselves, as 'knowledgers', to critical self-scrutiny. However, being reflexive involves more than laying bare one's psychological self, hence research is more than just writing the self in an individualistic sense. Here I want to suggest that an autobiographical stance which on the face of it appears to enshrine research as writing the self actually helps us to see reflexivity differently (in a socio-cultural rather than an individualistic sense) and thus provides critical conceptual resources for interrogating the production (writing) and consumption (reading) of research texts.

Con-text

If research is a textual practice, a textualising of the world through the production and consumption of authoritative knowledge-claims in the form of texts then these always have a con-text, in the sense of that which is *with* the text. What is 'with' the text is the situated autobiography of the researcher/reader. Here what is being highlighted is the socio-cultural subjective, the contextual self or the embodied and embedded self. By asking reflexive questions about con-text we can scrutinise the 'knowledging' effects of the self that researches and the self that 'reads', in both cases a self with an autobiography marked by the significations of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, etc. These significations are socio-cultural products that effect the very forms, outcomes and consequences of research and the way in which research is 'read'.

Pre-text

If research is a textual practice, then language as a signifying system assumes a central place. Here language needs to be seen not simply as a neutral vehicle for conveying representations but as an activity of 'languaging', the means through which the representational work of research is carried out. Consequently, research texts have a pre-text in the sense of that which is *before* the text; language as the repository of meaning, discourses as particular ways of organising meanings, the textual strategies, literary conventions and rhetorical devices of writing. This is an aspect of research that we pay little attention to - we focus on methods and outcomes and don't ask how meanings are created and received. The academic form that most research reports take actually conceals their own textuality, the pre-text repressed by the form itself. However, by asking reflexive questions about pre-text we can understand that the self as researcher writes within prescribed forms that create the meanings of the textualised world that is researched and of the texts that make knowledge claims about that world.

Sub-text

I referred earlier to research as a practice of 'presencing', of the making of authoritative claims to unmediated knowledgeability in the form of truthful representations of the world. What this implies is that claims to presence are implicated with the operation of power, the ability to claim and establish presence. Thus research texts have a sub-text in the sense of that which is *beneath* the text; the operation of research paradigms and traditions and the power/knowledge discourses through which they are expressed and have their effects (Foucault 1980). The research act is constituted by power relations between researcher and

researched whose outcome is the production and consumption of 'powerful' texts, texts which frequently become part of regulatory mechanisms in the domain of governmentality. This is something we often find it difficult to accept since we tend to think of research, particularly our personal research, as innocent, 'power-less', perhaps useful and emancipatory. A reflexive questioning of the sub-text enables us to better interrogate the implication of our practice within discourses of power and how it becomes part of oppressive and dominant discourses through a 'reflexive', in the sense of a taken for granted, acceptance of the neutrality of research, its pragmatic usefulness or its emancipatory potential - and how as writers and readers of research we become part of such discourses despite our best intentions.

Lost in texts?

Research as autobiography then is an accessible and productive way of understanding the textuality of research and the place of reflexivity - but only if we focus on the socio-cultural self rather than the individualistic self. However, as educational researchers we are immersed in a discourse where research is understood as a process rather than as a practice, and where these 'meta' questions appear unimportant and distracting - a pre-occupation that it is feared leads to becoming 'lost in texts'. We habitually think, therefore, that it's more important to concentrate solely on methods and outcomes. Of course, it is the very textuality of research as a practice which conceals reflexivity from us. Hence we require a means of foregrounding the textuality of research and the reflexivity inherent in this textual staging of knowledge. We can then develop a critical awareness of what is involved in the notion of the 'self'. This enables us to problematise the assumptions, directionality and effects of our research. It is only in this way that we can subvert dominant forms and become critical writers and readers with alternative strategies of our own.

Reflexivity and critique, critique through reflexivity, are skills which researchers in the field of adult learning need to develop. If our research is to grow and flourish it must be located within its own discernible research community which will obviously interact and overlap with wider communities of social science research and other types of educational research. Yet having said this, two things need to be borne in mind. First, that it is vital to problematise the 'taken for granteds' of social and educational research - and I am referring here to both positivist and interpretive paradigms, quantitative and qualitative approaches. Second, it is important that an adult learning research community continually problematise itself. It should not for example assume that there is a 'best' way of doing research, or that some key overarching criteria such as scientificity or usefulness exist, or that good intentions and an emancipatory purpose will necessarily lead to benevolent research.

In this paper I have on the face of it said nothing about the value and impact of research in the field of adult learning. It is only possible to say anything about this if there are communally agreed criteria of what constitutes 'value' and 'impact'. Yet even if these criteria could be agreed (and this is a big 'if') researchers need to look at research differently - and of course, by doing so a different way of looking at criteria might emerge. I have tried to present a way of looking differently at research - a way which foregrounds its textuality. Rather than becoming lost in texts, it hopefully allows us to find our way through research as text and the texts of research.

Note

Some of the ideas in this paper are elaborated further in Usher (1993).

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Human capital in 'modernising' China

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This paper is based upon field research carried out in Shandong Province, P.R.C., between 1989-94. The information is drawn from interviews conducted with 68 managers of State-owned and joint-venture enterprises, and 30 senior staff of vocational educational institutions. The aim of the research was to explore the impact of new forms of production on the economy in general and on the demands made on the traditional suppliers of skilled labour.

We start by suggesting that an orthodoxy has become established in respect of the importance of human capital to economic survival on a world scale. It is argued that economies seeking to compete in world markets, and even to defend domestic markets from massive penetration, must match the leading states in both productivity and quality. This truism has tended to focus attention on the need to upgrade basic technologies, to modify management styles and to redefine work as a less specialised activity requiring flexibility, responsibility and even creativity on the part of workers, who had previously been inducted into the highly specialised roles associated with mass-production (Collard, 1989). These latter patterns of productivity - often associated with 'Fordism' and 'Taylorist' scientific management - are often portrayed as completely outmoded (Touraine, 1974, Masuda, 1990).

Although the above may appear parodic, we wish to argue that such assumptions are made - at least ideologically - on a world scale. In the so-called 'industrially-developed' sector, Australia's drive for a 'smart society' reflects the U.K's attempts to achieve national training targets, and academic material pours from North America, extolling the importance of human resource management (Peters 1989, Howard 1990).

The assumptions are equally strongly held by newly-industrialising countries and those (perhaps the whole world) seeking to attract inward investment from 'footloose' multi-national capital. The pressure is sharpened in this latter case as trans-national companies need to be able to guarantee the standard quality of their products and are thus obliged to demand standards of labour skill that match those elsewhere in the world. The pressure on overall standardisation is particularly acute in cases where production is intended for re-export rather than for the host domestic market.

The other variation on inward investment relates to the way in which some interactional companies have divided up the production process in such a way that the commodity which finally reaches the market may have been created in several stages at different sites. The Pacific Basin is a major site of this form of production and the regions involved vie with each other to attract the parts of the production process where most 'value' is added to the final product such as attracting the highly skilled engineering components of production as opposed to basic assembly. If this can be achieved, the 'host' nation reaps maximum benefit from its involvement, and it is argued that to even have a chance of attracting such investment a 'skilled' labour force is a pre-requisite (UNESCO, 1993).

The final issue relates to nation states or regions seeking to enter the world market in direct competition with established producers. Here the thrust towards quality in production is pre-eminent as the natural price advantages associated with cheap labour are eroded by the use of increasingly efficient technology of the 'developed' world.

It is against this backdrop that China has embarked on its 'market socialism with Chinese characteristics': the introduction of market practices into areas of both production and the labour market, and the active encouragement of inward investment and joint-venture capital projects. The pace of this economic modernisation, with its sub-text of the need for a 'modern' workforce has had a massive impact on the institutions with the responsibility for educating/training the labour force. To understand the tensions emerging in the Chinese context it is essential to understand the basic pattern of Chinese education.

The system of education in China hinges upon a compulsory nine-year block, theoretically available to all children in the country, although provision is some rural areas has been allegedly uneven. (See Figure 1).

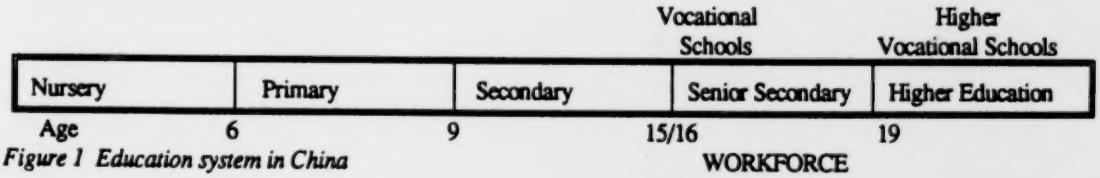

Figure 1 Education system in China

For the purposes of this paper it is necessary to note three features of the system in the post-compulsory sector. Firstly, all advance beyond the age of sixteen is dependent upon success in nationally-set examinations, and students frequently take examinations for both the academic route and the vocational options, the latter usually serving as an 'insurance' against failure in the former. Also, although in theory fifteen/sixteen year olds are free to enter the workforce, few actually take the option, choosing to stay within the system to re-take the examinations in the following year. Secondly, the institutions in the post-compulsory sector can be broadly related to a tri-partite division in the labour force, with the higher education providing the managerial and scientific personnel, the higher vocational schools providing the technicians and middle management, and the national schools providing the semi-skilled/skilled workers. Although crude, this distinction gives a flavour of the centrally-controlled flow of labour supply. Finally, and perhaps more importantly, the level of qualification was/is directly linked to the jobs to which young workers were allocated and, crucially, to the wage level, and, once allocated mobility within the labour force was/is extremely difficult (Wallis, 1994). In recent years the rigid system has been eased, but many of its dominant features remain in place.

The research in Shandong sought to explore how the new Companies - based on high quality production and 'imported' management styles - were handling a work force faced with major changes in occupational practice. The first comment that should be made is that for a number of the new units it was recognised that although the production levels were higher and working patterns different, the levels of 'skill' required of the labour force were not significantly higher as the key variable was often in the highly-capitalised technology requiring minimal levels of skills in the operative. This issue of potential de-skilling has been noted in the West for a number of years.

However, the key finding of the research was that managers found the established 'tradition' of worker preparation basically dysfunctional. Many referred to a 'culture' of labour that was not suitable to modern production techniques, and, while many referred to a general disregard for standards and quality control, others referred to more 'ideological' objections of workers in terms of a desire to have some say in work practices and organisation. Some compromise went so far as to actively emphasise the physical difference between working in the 'new regimes' and the old (plant lay-out, lighting, decoration etc.,) to encourage a sense of transition in the workforce. Repeatedly evidence emerged that what managers most sought to foster were 'right attitudes', and the resonance with earlier Western concerns which centred on the debates around 'life and social' skills within state training provision.

This concern appears to be having a direct impact on recruitment policy in some sectors. Firstly, there is a trend to recruit young workers not as yet steeped in the 'older' Chinese labour culture. Secondly, there appears a tendency to see the state vocational sector as a problem and not a solution, and enterprises are by-passing the system and seeking to recruit workers directly from schools. This last point is well-instanced by a hotel group recruiting the majority of staff from young people who had failed the University entrance examinations and then training them in-house to the standards set by the company. While acknowledging the 'training' was narrow and highly functional, they argued that they worked to international 'standards' and not to 'introverted and out-dated models'.

The foreign and joint ventures are able to intervene in the labour market in this way because they are free to recruit whoever they please and, more importantly, they can pay at levels fixed by themselves. This last feature has had a shock effect in some areas. For example, there are cases of University graduates trained as foreign language teachers working in hotels and at tourist sites, not primarily using their acquired language, but having been hired in domestic roles, their second language being a useful additional skill for the employer to call on from time to time. The most dramatic example of this feature was a senior school teacher working as a cleaner. She pointed out that she earned more in the job than teaching and was thus acting with impeccable economic logic. As the dual labour market emerges the links between initial educational investment and its social application may well come under stress, as may the ability of the Chinese State to maintain certain sectors of public provision such as education at their current standards of operation as workers seek the higher rewards of the new enterprises.

In a more general sense, there are also the first signs of relatively large-scale internal economic migration, as individuals begin to move to the sites of potential high employment. This has been a consistent pattern in countries where uneven development has been a feature of economic growth (Martin and Rowthorn, 1986), and can be seen as in the European Union as workers from the poorer regions use their trans-national freedoms to move to the areas of high earnings and high employment possibilities. Also, the tensions articulated around ethnicity, region of origin associated with the 'developed' world is beginning to appear in Chinese cities. Finally, such 'freedom' of mobility may be of particular importance in a country where it may be deemed essential to encourage a large part of the population to remain in agricultural production.

The issue of unemployment also looms as a distinct future possibility in the People's Republic of China.

Irrespective of training issues, the impact of technology on certain sectors of the economy can have profound implications for the number of workers required. It may be that the Chinese economy has the space to soak up displaced labour in the context of successive expansion, but the links between technological innovation and structural employment is well documented in other parts of the world (Thrift, 1984).

Other issues that have arisen in connection with moves to the 'post-industrial', post-Fordist world, are also evident. Firstly, it can be argued that the new systems of production will only need a small core of key workers - highly skilled and highly paid - and a periphery of less skilled workers who are brought in and out of production as circumstances dictate (Therborn, 1986). It could be that such relations will generate an 'underclass' of those unable to gain access to the labour market and excluded from the general wealth of the state. Such groups are already in evidence in the United Kingdom and appear to be characterised by alienation and low self-esteem (McGivney, 1993).

Secondly, it could be argued that what is perceived in China as a 'market' means of generating wealth under socialist conditions, could be no more than the state's integration into a newly re-formed international capitalist order as the metropolitan centres retain the research and high-skill base while exporting relatively low technology to the low wage-cost areas (Massey and Allen, 1988). If this is the case then the whole up-skilling debate may be no more than an ideological smokescreen, masking more fundamental shifts in global production, and critical attacks on the need for training (Shackleton, 1993) and the intensification of exploitation inherent in 'modern' management styles have already appeared (Tomaney, 1990).

Finally, the crucial contradiction between a recent Communist history and market capitalism has to be faced. Whether it is possible to bend capitalist forms to serve socialist ends remains to be seen. Already there are signs of a 'moral panic' over the young in China, who are accused of losing their sense of collective responsibility and devoting their lives to consumption. Such criticism is usually raised as a deeply ethical issue. In the words of Confucius, these are 'interesting times' indeed.

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Suggestions about 'special' are being called for

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Introduction

The changes in the education of adults with special needs over recent years have taken place haphazardly and a lot of problems have arisen. The FEFC has appointed the Tomlinson Committee: 'to review FE for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.'

This committee's recommendations will hopefully alleviate some of these problems. However, having only just started its work, the committee has called for submissions of evidence and suggestions. After reviewing some recent changes and noting some current problems, I intend to make some suggestions about how this area of education might be advanced.

Background changes in society and education in general.

Initially, however, before considering changes in the education of adults with special needs, it is important to briefly note some changes in society at large and education in general, as these influence special education.

Community Care

Firstly there is community care. In the past people with disabilities were often segregated from the rest of society in residential schools, longstay hospitals etc. There has been the move over recent years to decrease this segregation and integrate people with disabilities into the community. This is related to the principle of normalisation, that is, 'making available to disabled people patterns of everyday life which are as close as possible to the norms of mainstream society' (Wolfensberger).

The disability movement

Another development, stemming from disabled people themselves is the disability movement. Early organisations concerned with the welfare of people with disabilities were organisations for disabled people. However, disabled people found that such organisations did not fulfil all their needs and so they developed self-help groups. Some of these have developed into organisations of disabled people. Among other things, they aim to enable disabled people to have more say in their participation in society. They maintain that disabled people should arrange their own affairs and should develop self-advocacy.

School education

Thirdly, there have been changes in special education in schools following the Warnock Report and the 1981 and 1993 Education Acts.

All children can be differentiated into those with Special Educational Needs (hereafter SENs), and those without such needs. A child has a SEN in effect if s/he has a Learning Difficulty which needs Special Educational Provision (hereafter LD and SEP respectively). The notion of SEN is seen as involving an interaction between the individual and the environment.

The concept of LD in the 1981 Act is logically problematic. There are at least two types of problems:

1. What is the denotation of the concept?
The Act specifies two sorts of LD. That is:

a. where someone has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of his/her age group, *and*
b. where someone has a disability which hinders take-up of educational facilities provided locally.

The first of these consists of several sorts which can be separated, they may be due, for example, to

a(i) biological factors, for instance Downs syndrome, *or*
a(ii) social factors, such as emotional problems.

The definition in the Act is a stipulated definition; it is not the definition used in everyday speech.

2. Even if we specify an instance from the denotation, we have the further problem of what extent of a problem is required to constitute a LD.
Are we to understand the terminology of the Act - 'a significantly greater difficulty' - in a statistical sense?

The concept thus has a series of fuzzy boundaries. Assuming we can get round the problems of definition, pupils with persistent and severe SENs

are given an official 'statement' which specifies their needs and what SEP they should receive.
The process of assessment of SENs for a child is a long and complex process involving different professions.

The framework of FE
Another change in society has involved the legislative and financial framework of FE. FE colleges which were part of Local Authority provision have been incorporated as independent institutions and are now financed largely by the FEFC. There are therefore considerable changes in the financing of special education, as specified in FEFC circular 93/32.

IT developments
A final and rather different type of development in society which has important implications in this area of education is the IT explosion.

Changes in Practice.
The above changes have prompted changes in adult special educational practice. For example adult education for people with disabilities has lagged behind other sectors of adult education in the extent to which students are involved in decisions about their education. The idea that an individual has a right to have a say in his/her education is of course a main tenet in adult education, emphasised by, for example, Knowles and C. Rogers.
However, the content of courses for people with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLDs), has been decided almost exclusively by tutors (Jagger, 1990). This is however now changing, (Dee, 1988; Sutcliffe, 1990), and self-advocacy courses are now occurring.
Similarly there has been a move in general education to involve students in the assessment of their education. This is also now taking place to an extent in special education (Dee, 1988.
One of the most noticeable changes has been the increase in the numbers of people with special needs in general FE colleges. Two decades ago I reported on one of the first FE courses for people with SLDs (Sanders and Watson, 1975). Such courses are now commonplace.
For people with SLDs, in addition to courses in FE colleges, there are day centres which provide some education. A major change in these was suggested in the 1970s by the 'National Development Group for the Mentally Handicapped' (the NDG). They recommended that the long established Adult Training Centres (ATCs), which had an industrial occupation orientation, should become Social Education Centres (SECs) with a more educational orientation. This recommendation has been taken up in some parts of the country and not in others.
One of the changes which has been brought about by the new funding procedures is the move to accreditation. In the area of special needs this emphasises the need for demonstrating progress and progression.
There have been important changes in special education due to developments in IT. To give but a few instances: whereas previously people who could not speak had to rely on simple communication boards, there are now complex electronic devises controlled by touch. For blind people there is e.g. the Kerzweil reading machine which can read script, i.e. it translates printed script into sound.
Generally there is the whole area of computer assisted learning and of course the Open University offers tremendous opportunities, indeed the 'Open University has more students with disabilities than all other UK HE institutions together' (Child, 1989).

Some problems in special education for adults
The rapid growth noted above has occurred haphazardly and not without some difficulties.
Changes in child education preceded many of those in adult education. As we move into adult education from child education we find a major shift in terminology and all that that entails.
Firstly while the 1981 and 1993 Education Acts define LDs, SEP and SENs, the corresponding Act for adults, the FHE Act 1992 defines LDs *mutatis mutandis* but does not even mention, let alone define, either SENs or SEP.
The first problem is, if there are difficulties in the concept of LD in child education, how shall we define it in adult education? It is to be noted that although ostensibly the same concept, 'LD' in adult education has a smaller denotation than in child education.
The second problem is that the FHEA uses the term 'disability'; how is that to be defined? Then also we must realise that in adult education SEN does not mean the same thing as in child education.
Further, while in child education an elaborate procedure to assess LDs and SENs is required, in adult education there is no specified procedure.
To quote, 'there is no such requirement (for a specific procedure) this is because a more flexible procedure is required at this stage of life' (cf. Powell, 1992).
Many colleges at present simply ascertain whether a student has a disability and if so use that to indicate what special needs the student has and so what SEP is required.
This leads to considerable inconsistency from college to college, that is it leads to injustice. The

lack of an independent and formalised assessment procedure is one of the least satisfactory aspects of the FHEA (Dryden, 1994).

Another aspect of assessment is the specification of progress. This is usually straight forward, but for example in the education of adults with severe learning difficulties, progress is often of a rather intangible nature; for example, increased confidence etc., and is very difficult to objectify.

Moving to a different aspect of practice, in child education most education is provided by educational institutions. In adult education this is not so. For example if you are a person with an SLD it is quite by chance whether your local day centre is an ATC or an SEC, with all the resultant variation in educational opportunities this implies. This chance factor is very unsatisfactory.

Furthermore, in adult life a lot of education, in the form of an aspect of rehabilitation, is provided in community care, and is provided by health and SSDs. In the regulatory arrangements for community care, education is explicitly excluded; for example, a letter from the Department of Health quoted by Lavender and Godding (1992) states that it is 'not appropriate to include (adult education provision) within the community care remit'.

Some responses to some of the problems

The Tomlinson Committee posed some questions. Some of these are now listed with some suggestions. They asked:

What does 'disability' mean?

There are different models of disability; for example, the medical model, the administrative model, the psychological model, the sociological model, the legal model and others. Put in the extreme, the medical model says a disability is a lack of ability due to a physical impairment, while the sociological model says a disability is a lack of ability which may be due to socially imposed constraints. I have considered this in detail elsewhere (Watson, 1994).

In my view both of these models are to an extent valid in different instances of disability and so each of the various models has some value in different situations and it is sensible to use different instances of these models selectively as appropriate.

The term disability is ambiguous. It does not mean just one thing. However, in the present context it is advisable (and here I am arbitrarily stipulating one approach) to use the behavioural model used in the government's Office of Population Census Survey (Martin et al., 1988).

What does 'Learning Difficulty' mean?

Although the forms of wording, about LDs, are the same (*mutatis mutandis*) in the child and adult acts of 1981 and 1992, in so far as the 1992 Act does not go on to define or discuss SEP and SEN, the contexts of the term LD are different in the two acts and so the implications behind the words differ in the two Acts. In particular, the denotation in the adult Act is smaller than in the child Act, and, referring back to the discussion on school education, the adult Act denotation seems to cover a(i) and b, but not a(ii).

With regard to a(i) it appears to have the same denotation as 'mental impairment' in the 1983 Mental Health Act. If this is so, it is worth noting that there are precise operational definitions available.

How should individual needs be assessed?

Concerning assessment, there is of course a major difference between the situation of children and adults entering an educational institution. The assessment of a child is a long and complex process. The majority of students with LDs or disabilities entering an FE institution will have been assessed as children and will bring with them a Transition Plan as specified by the 1993 Act.

So it is not a question of assessing all FE students with disabilities from scratch. With regard to the rest it seems to me that their assessment should be no less thorough than that experienced by their peers who were assessed as children.

What about the management of provision?

Considering the variation between ATCs and SECs, my suggestion is simple to formulate; the recommendations of the NDG should be mandatory.

Concerning the role of education in community care, the FEFC should request that the de facto situation, that education has a role in community care, should be formally recognised.

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Bungy jumping the bridge between potential and opportunity.

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The design, delivery and assessment of first year Scottish university teaching has in the past given little opportunity to the newly fledged school pupil - now adult university student - to steadily acquire general study skills and develop them into specific subject specialisms. 'Study skills', if it appears at all in the Scottish secondary school curriculum, is seen as part of social and personal development, but the skills talked about in schools are often unrelated to those required at university level, or indeed for future employment[1].

Indeed, there is a metaphor that could be employed to demonstrate the lack of support given to and speed required of these new university students to re-orientate from school-fed notes and demonstrate ability in research inquiry. This complete turn around has to be understood and completed as effectively and speedily as the two minute guided tour of the university library classification system supposedly turns them into instant experts in archive retrieval. Additionally, little thought is given to translating the skills students do eventually acquire at university into those skills which graduate employers actively seek[2,3].

In the past, students, nonetheless, have coped. They quickly became independent (or else dropped out). Statistics show that the highest undergraduate drop-out rates occur within the first year. Counselling services' personnel maintain that this decision to leave is taken within the first term, even though it may not be acted upon until a term or two later[4,5]. Students have to learn by trial and error how to take lecture notes, how to write university style essays and some have even been known to find the appropriate sections of the library from which to withdraw books within the first term! Once successfully though the degree programme, the lack of a firm foundation in personal transferable skills is again highlighted. The current economic climate puts a high premium on the ability and skill of individuals to plan and manage their own learning and working careers, however, 'many graduates fall short of employer expectation'[6].

But those who leave school and directly proceed to university and thence directly to the world of work are not the only type of student who have been and will continue to be flung into the deep end. There have always been others less well equipped to survive, such as the increasing market of mature adult returners (a little out of study skills practice after a break from education). These adult returners are often baptised into higher degree studies by means of access courses. Access courses are aimed at those in the university locality with academic potential but not yet equipped with the experience not to end up as a drop-out statistic if admitted directly on a degree course. Interestingly, the students (school leavers or adults) who attend any form of access course, and those who survive them to gain an undergraduate place at university, reflect the characteristics of what will be a growing number of the undergraduate student body in general:

1. Those who apply locally - because of political changes to student grant support they can no longer afford to live away from home and study perhaps at an institute more academically suited to their ability or needs.

2. Particularly those who might previously have applied through the PICAS system to polytechnics for applied courses for which they may have been better suited.

3. Those applying to science faculties and who, because of the broad based national curriculum, increasingly do not have a sufficient science background to cope with a specialised science degree.

4. Those who will increasingly use the system of semesterisation, modularisation, credit transfer and part-time study, picking up and pulling out over a number of years.

5. Those with a non-traditional C.V. and therefore doubly disadvantaged as age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic factors all appear to influence the likelihood of being unemployed or under-employed following a course of Higher Education study[7].

These characteristics, amongst others, cry out for the need to form a study skills safety net below the bridge between school (or time out), and the completion of a degree course. (Or indeed parts of a degree course taken with breaks, or accumulated via modules which, with all the will in the world will never perfectly articulate.) There is also the need for these study skills to be seen not only as an

induction to university pressures, but also as a translation to those real life deadlines of students' subsequent professional lives.

Whatever the next few years bring, as the flavour of upper secondary education in Scotland is altered post-Howie, together with a possible growth in numbers of accredited prior learning students, there is a need for research into and application of the most suitable induction practises of study skills in all subject areas for first year and/or credit transfer students, and of the translation of these skills for future employment.

University teaching, design and delivery can not afford to slip back to an ivory tower approach. There needs to be a clearer understanding not only of the content (specialist knowledge) of courses which lead into undergraduate programmes, but also of the type of skills which the students who have taken them might reasonably be expected to have. Refresher programmes as well as study skills clinics focusing on, for example, personal and institutional orientation, information retrieval, academic writing, personal development (for example,. numerical skills, computing etc.), inter-personal skills, need to be made available and actively promoted. In particular, there is a need for mathematical skills clinics to encompass the needs of all departments in science, social science and engineering, at various levels of student ability. Research at Dundee University has shown that non-traditional students require a greater emphasis on personal transferable and mathematical skills due to often disrupted educational backgrounds.[8,9]

Personal transferable skills with a view to future employment could be covered in students' third and fourth years. Additionally, careers clinics for interview skills could be developed in co-operation with local industry. This would give trainee managers the opportunity to practise interviewing skills, (and particularly) non - traditional students the confidence of several practice interviews for different types of employment. Clinics could also be held for the non-traditional students to gain advice about how best to present their experience and qualifications so as not to appear 'dis-advantaged' and possibly miss out on an interview.

With the population of students increasingly diversifying, the stresses will become greater than ever before on the support service systems of educational and personal guidance. Universities will increasingly need a network of support services, perhaps formalising personal tutoring and adopting records of achievements which in-corporate learner contracts or action plans.

With changes in the upper secondary education system in Scotland, and the emphasis on broad based National Curricula, universities also need to evaluate their range of undergraduate specialist subject degree course provision. There is still the need for degree courses which pick up (to a greater or lesser extent) from where Advanced level or Sixth Year Studies left off. But, there is also a need for those who arrive from non-traditional routes to have a parallel entry to a degree programme. This type of degree is starting to emerge within Scottish universities. It widens and lowers the level of the first year degree specific subject content, but expects students to catch up in the second year. To make this a realistic option, it should include the consonance of a discrete study skills programme with the specific skills of the specialist subject modules. This broad based start can be built up and well-founded skills transferred. This would allow time for the students to become familiar with general and specific study skills and better prepared to increase their specialist subject knowledge as the course speeds up.

Universities are a preparation for life, a bridge to travel across. Bungy jumping from bridges is a high risk sport. Students always have the option to bungy jump, but we should not force them to leap off and hope that they stabilise and land safely with a degree and job secured. If we deny those who have the potential, the opportunity of a more secure crossing, then we are using higher education as a new form of 11 (or 18) (or mature student) plus.

Notes

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[3] C.B.I. (1993) *Towards a skills revolution.*

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[5] personal communication N.Halpin, University of Dundee Counselling Service (based on confidential information from a variety of Scottish Universities)

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What women students want from women's studies in adult continuing education: the case of women students in the University of Sheffield

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Introduction

One challenge for university adult continuing education in the last decade of the century with the change to a qualification driven funding methodology (see HEFCE circular 3/94), is how to continue to meet the needs of a diverse range of adults who frequently have not previously participated in higher education or who have studied under the non-certificated liberal adult education (LAE) umbrella. I would suggest that at the heart of this challenge is a tension between on the one hand the perception of learning as a collaborative activity in which tutors and students can share experiences and ideas through group discussions (Hampton and Hampton, 1994) and on the other hand a perception, which maybe somewhat outdated and mythological but for participants quite real, of teaching and learning as being something done by experts to non experts. This second model of education usually involves assessment of the individual and this has traditionally entailed measuring a performance in relation to a norm. For adult learners it may also have associations with previous negative experiences of education and as a consequence be something few would wish to repeat.

A further concern is that as LAE changes its nomenclature from 'non vocational' to 'vocational' in order to retain public funding, there may be a shift in who comprises the 'clientele'. For example, a recent study of one university adult and continuing education department showed a shift from non-certificated liberal adult programmes towards training and PICKUP courses led to the recruitment of very different students. Overwhelmingly the new students were from urban business and professional groups and mature students seeking entry to degree courses (Hester and Florence, 1992). Added to this concern is another dimension that needs to be considered; this is that the typical adult student following a non-certificated programme has been female (McGivney, 1994: p.6). The Division of Adult Continuing Education (DACE) in the University of Sheffield is typical in this respect. A survey of all courses in one month in February 1993 found that women comprised 62% of the student body (Sharma, 1994). Yet an analysis of recent British and American adult education journals found that gender was rarely considered as a significant variable even though women formed up to two-thirds of the subjects in these studies and articles (Hayes,1992: 136). Where studies of adults have given attention to the impact of gender they have noted that many women have expressed the view that they are unskilled and that they fear that they may not be able to meet the demands made upon them in re-entering education and training, and frequently, these studies have included women with a wide range of qualifications, including degrees. (McGivney, 1994: 28-29). The significance of this gender blindness is that if women have different and more negative attitudes towards educational and vocational qualifications compared with men then the move to certificated adult learning will need to be sensitively conducted if these women are to continue their involvement in life-long learning. The challenge will be to develop strategies for teaching, learning and assessment in higher education that build confidence rather than instil fear; which empower rather than create negative self-images; and which ensure that the learning is placed in a framework of qualifications and external quality assurance that enables further participation and progression within nationally recognised education routes.

This case study provides an opportunity to reflect on an experience in which a tutor initiated a collaborative activity with her students and which became the framework for teaching and learning with this group. In describing the way in which the collaborative activity developed I will attempt to draw out issues for practitioners interested in the following:

- Those working with adults in a changing climate in which LAE courses are increasingly being assessed and becoming 'qualifications'.
- Those working with adults who have not traditionally participated in higher education.
- Those who seek in their teaching practice to reduce the asymmetry of the structure they operate in and develop processes which empower the learners.

Rationale

As a lecturer in Women's Studies within DACE, I received a request for further study from a group of students who had attended a course in Feminist Research Methods. They wished to develop their understanding of the issues raised in that course and wished to do something practical to develop their experiences of these. As tutor I suggested we form a research methods group and that since DACE was undergoing changes in the funding and delivery of courses from university liberal adult education to accredited university level modules, a critical case to examine which might inform the development of good practice in the Division was the experiences and perceptions of Women's Studies students. This case was identified because it seemed to illustrate the model of adult education in which large numbers of women participated in a programme but they did not necessarily seek certification of their learning. Women's Studies had been running as an accredited programme since 1987 and over 250 students had attended the modules but relatively few had completed a full level 1 certificate or level 2 diploma in higher education. With the liberal adult education programme moving to this certificated structure and the Women's Studies developing a full degree programme (part-time) to meet the demand from some students, curriculum planners in DACE needed to know the following:

1. What kinds of students enrolled on qualification courses, and in what ways were they similar or different from students following non-certificated learning?
2. Why did some complete the assessments for all modules and others merely attend the classes?
3. What are the needs and expectations of these particular women students and are they being meet by the provision, if not, why not?

The group of students who wished to work collaboratively on this topic were all women and they had had a range of contact with the Division, from attendance on a variety of non accredited courses to attendance on accredited women's studies modules. Their diversity of experience of adult education included a range of motives for undertaking further study and provided a breadth which was invaluable when developing the research questions and methodology to identify what women students want from DACE.

Developing the research questions

The starting point was to brainstorm around the questions of what DACE might want to know about these Women's Studies students given firstly, the new qualification driven funding context, secondly, the stated commitment and mission of the University to widen access to those who had participated least and thirdly, the commitment by staff in the Division to developing Women's Studies as a discipline which is different from and critical of traditional disciplines both in content and delivery. This exercise led to the selection of particular methods to address particular research questions and was underpinned by three concerns which were as follows: firstly, that research should be for the women students past, current and potential as much as it for curriculum planners in DACE; secondly, it should give women students a voice; and thirdly, it should be explicit about how the research group's experiences had shaped the research questions and methods, methodology and analysis.

The foci of the research were on two aspects of the Women's Studies students: firstly, who they were and what were their characteristics and background; and secondly, what were their perceptions and understanding of their experiences of becoming and being Women's Studies students? However, underlying these foci and questions was a concern that in the attempt to provide information which could inform teaching and learning practice, the diversity of women's needs and experiences should not be underplayed in the search for patterns and clusters which neatly compartmentalised such experiences into a form that curriculum planners could respond to.

Such concerns led to lively discussions about what type of questions could be asked and in what form, for example, should we use written questionnaires with closed or open questions, formal or informal interviews, group interviews and so on. In the end after critically examining a range of interview and questionnaire schedules the group decided to adopt a multiplicity of methods including a written questionnaire with closed and open questions and informal individual and group interviews. The rationale for each method was as follows: the written questionnaire with structured responses was thought to build confidence and encourage completion. It would also provide useful information from which some typologies could be developed. These questions would be balanced by some space to offer other comments or give other experiences and some sections would be entirely open to reflect the diversity of the students' experiences.

For example, the questionnaire included a life-line chart which women were encouraged to complete

using either words or pictures. Clearly this form of response has implications for analysis and highlighted the need to be explicit about how inferences were drawn from this diverse material. The group felt that the potential research 'population' of Women's Studies students would be familiar and relatively comfortable with such a self reflective activity and the quality of the responses suggested that to pose such an open question was a risk worth taking. Even those members of the group who declared themselves to be the sort of person who normally threw away such 'intrusive' questioning material suggested that the targeted students for these questions were likely to welcome this unconventional way of conveying their experiences and perceptions.

On reflection, the process of developing the questionnaire was similar to that described in conventional research design as the pilot phase. The members of the group with their diversity of experiences of adult education and Women's Studies provided an opportunity to cross-check the reliability and validity of questions as they were developed. Many other research teams drawn from people perhaps with a narrower range of experiences may be less able to do this. In this way the research process was similar to one of practitioner research and critical reflection was a central feature not only of this process of doing the research but it also promoted learning within the group. In addition, I would assert that the diversity of experiences that these practitioners brought to the research problems resulted in a questionnaire that was quite different and more ground breaking than many others directed at adult students.

In relation to the interviews, following a period of guided reading and discussion, the group decided to conduct both individual and group interviews. The former focused on the more personal experiences, perceptions and motivations of the Women's Studies students in a way which was likely to be emotionally charged. This called for the interviewer-interviewee relationship to be one in which experiences were shared and support was given. The purpose of these individual interviews was to give a voice to the possible tensions and conflicts many women returners to education experienced. These tensions and conflicts have been well documented by others (see McGivney, 1994: 10), but this work has added a rich case history dimension to the developing body of knowledge. In contrast, the group interviews focused more on institutional structures and organisation with the aim of identifying a range of issues and concerns which could be addressed more immediately by policy-makers and which enabled the practitioner-participants to begin to identify good practice.

Reflection on the outcomes

The outcomes of this collaborative learning involved both product and process; and within this the product had been an explicit objective and the process implicit.

In developing the research design and in carrying out the research on Women's Studies students, the group produced a valuable product for DACE. The results of this timely piece of research enabled DACE to find out more about two things; firstly, who studied on certificate and non-certificate Women's Studies programmes and how these students felt about their experiences; and secondly, what might be the impact on such students of the move to accreditation for all courses.

In addition, the process of producing this information had further implicit outcomes as follows: firstly, the group and individual learning were complex and high level and there was evidence of critical reflection by students of their research practice and wider reading. This could be authenticated by the production of the research, and all the materials development which had enabled the investigation to be carried out. For example, records of discussions and the development of ideas existed on flip-charts, in research memos exchanged between members of the group and in the final versions of the questionnaire, interview guidelines and so on. Since all of this had been documented it would have been relatively simple to make explicit the learning of all group members and to provide the evidence of this learning for external scrutiny. Secondly, even without the results of the investigation the process of developing a research design in collaboration with the researched identified many issues which also showed how adult students viewed the development of part-time qualifications in DACE. This material was able to be made explicit and so provided another rich source of data which could be taken into account by any planners.

The challenge for adult continuing education departments such as DACE which are developing university level award bearing courses will be to build on the experiences of such collaborative teaching and learning. This will involve the ability to write course submissions which are responsive to the interests of groups of learners and which can articulate the learning outcomes of collaborative activities. Within this the good practice required to motivate learners and in particular women, who may not initially have been seeking qualifications, will be to provide documentation of the collaborative learning in a way which does not intrude into the learning process but which can be

made available for external scrutiny so that the learning can be externally recognised.

This case study has been one attempt to document how one group has set about this task. There will be many more examples that we should share that show how informal learning activities for women need not have educational or vocational qualifications as their only aim in order to lead to that outcome (McGivney, 1994: p.83).

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The changing undergraduate culture: implications for research

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Introduction

Over the last few years, Britain has witnessed a dramatic expansion in higher education and a marked change in the nature of the student body at all levels. Statistics show that during the 1980s, growth was three times as rapid for mature students (i.e. those aged over 21 years) generally as for younger people with the most rapid growth being among mature women students. Indeed, during the period 1980 - 90, the numbers of mature students studying full-time for a first degree grew by 102 per cent (DES, 1992). Of course, this change has been more prominent in some institutions and subject areas than others but, nevertheless, mature students, both full and part-time have been the focus for a considerable number of research studies. These have mainly been concerned with issues of recruitment and access, aspects of on-course provision and support and, to a lesser extent, with student outcomes. In some of these studies, there has been an unfortunate tendency to stereotype mature students and a failure to recognise their diversity. Mature students are not a homogeneous group; they come to higher education from a variety of backgrounds, motivated by a range of factors and with diverse needs and expectations which may change over time. My purpose here is to consider one aspect of the impact of mature students in higher education which has hitherto scarcely been addressed - the changing nature of the internal undergraduate culture - what Duke (1992) has called the 'soft' non-quantifiable aspect of institutional change. I begin by commenting briefly on issues related to defining and exploring culture in this context; I then suggest which aspects of the changing undergraduate culture might be amenable to investigation. Finally, I consider some possible research strategies.

Defining and exploring culture

Culture is often defined as that which is shared and/or unique to a given organisation or group - values, beliefs, activities. It may have been invented, discovered or developed by an organisation/group as it learns to adapt to external conditions and to cope with problems of internal integration. If it has worked well enough to be considered valid, it is taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1991). In discussing undergraduate culture, however, we have to be aware that any identifiable consensus within this group must be seen in relation to the wider institution of which it is part. For a higher education institution has to develop its own consensus on its mission, functions and primary tasks in relation to its environment; and on its specific goals and how these are to be achieved together with the criteria to be used for measuring results. Internally, it has to develop a common language and to make clear the criteria for the allocation of power, status and authority as well as the system for the allocation of rewards. Yet higher education generally is currently struggling with these tasks as it seeks to reformulate its mission and purposes in response to changing environmental pressures (Barnett, 1990; Duke, 1992). It is within this changing environment that an institution may come to involve new cultural patterns of values, meanings and behaviour.

Although its own culture may be in a state of flux, a higher education institution also gives rise to and supports a collection of sub-cultures, of which, as we have seen, the undergraduate sub-unit is just one. Other sub-cultures, which share some features of the dominant culture to varying degrees, may be formed by academic staff in different disciplines or departments (Becher, 1989), or by other groups such as academic related staff, researchers, clerical and domestic workers. There may be other cultural variants such as those of gender, ethnicity and, increasingly, age, which cut across a range of sub-cultures. In considering undergraduate culture, then, we have to be aware of ways in which, within an individual institution, other sub-cultures emerge and relate both to the broader culture and to each other.

How can undergraduate culture be identified and analysed for features of change? Writers on organisational behaviour have struggled to devise a theoretical framework which might capture the major similarities and differences among the various approaches to the study of organisational/group culture. (for example, Frost et al, 1991). Most studies appear to adopt a unitary perspective in which diverse organisational/group interests are assumed to be consistent in their behaviour and in common agreement. This approach can, however, be usefully contrasted with a paradigm which stresses the value of recognising pluralistic, differentiated interests (Meyerson and

Martin, 1987). In this way, a higher education institution can be acknowledged to embrace multiple cultures which themselves may be in a state of flux. It becomes difficult to study only one cultural group without developing an awareness of the beliefs, assumptions and values of other groups and how they inter-relate.

From the perspective of differentiation, when we come to address the culture of one particular group, then we need to investigate what the group's shared assumptions, values and meanings are, which of these are passed on and adopted by new members and which are discarded or cause dislocation within a group so that they actually fail to become part of the culture. As with the larger institution, those assumptions and beliefs which undergraduates have come to share and take-for-granted may come to be influenced by local circumstances and events as well as by environmental pressures.

What can we study?

Taking the above elements into account, what aspects of undergraduate culture can be investigated? We have noted the perils of assuming that mature students are a homogeneous group; but traditional age undergraduates may also display considerable diversity in attitudes and beliefs. A starting point might be to investigate the attitudes of younger and older undergraduates to each other, particularly regarding the formal learning situation where there is presumably some cultural consensus over desired outcomes. Some preliminary work carried out on a small scale at the University of Warwick suggests that younger undergraduates come to see mature students as an asset within the university community - they may, for example, socialise younger colleagues into a more autonomous form of study or provide an informal cross-age counselling service (Field, 1989). Other studies suggest that mature students' perceptions of younger undergraduates as bright, confident and particularly advantaged may have been corrected by the end of the first year, as have their misperceptions about the nature of campus life (Gardner and Pickering, 1991; 1992). However, these findings need further investigation before they can be generalised to other institutions.

It has been observed that, in studying one group's culture, it is necessary to be aware of its relationship to other sub-cultures. It may be pertinent, therefore, to examine the implications of teaching mixed age groups for different groups of academic staff. Although there is a growing literature on aspects of teaching mature students, evidence of how an academic, departmental or discipline-based culture reacts to a changing undergraduate mix is not well documented. Duke (1992) reports that he has 'colleagues who are pleased to take a large minority of mature age students into their courses, but resist the proportion reaching 50 per cent' (p.71).

We have seen how, in a higher education context, other strong group cultures may have emerged. The implications of the increasingly diverse nature of the student body for administrative, other academic-related staff and those in domestic roles have yet to be explored. In a campus-based, mainly residential university, the latter may have developed, as part of their culture consensus, a considerable degree of power in relation to young undergraduates; power which may be eroded by a change towards a more mature, non-residential intake.

How can it be studied?

Approaches to the study of organisational cultures and sub-cultures have become more varied as the growing literature of this aspect of organisational behaviour demonstrates (e.g. Tsoukas, 1994). It may be that traditional survey research methods and the analytical, descriptive approach which attempts to describe and 'measure' culture are not necessarily appropriate for researchers adopting a differentiation perspective. Schein (1991) points out that emphasising cultural manifestations which are easier to identify and observe may mean that the chance to decipher the deeper set of phenomena which bind those manifestations together may be lost.

Many of those who have researched organisational or sub-group cultures have tried to overcome these problems through use of an ethnographic approach. The aim is to recognise the existence of deeper structures within a culture which might be better understood through intensive observation and the collection of interview data from informants or 'cultural insiders'. However, such an approach runs the risk of focusing research attention on some limited aspects of cultural behaviour without relating it to other phenomena within a group; or failing to understand a group's culture vis-à-vis the culture of other groups with which it interacts.

Schein (1991) suggests that culture is manifested at different levels and can therefore be studied at these different levels. One method which might be explored is to encourage group members to examine their own culture combined with the observations of an 'outsider'. Such a method involves a brainstorming exercise in which group members are encouraged to describe all visible group structures and processes in order to make apparent the manifest side of their culture. They are then pushed into naming the values implied by these artefacts and finally into identifying the shared underlying assumptions lying behind the

artefacts and values. The process can then be extended to other sub-cultures and overlapping cultural altitudes mapped out as well as sources of potential conflict identified. Issues which surface may be concerned with resistance to change, the need to examine whether assumptions which worked in the past are still consistent with practical realities; and, as Schein notes, the need to identify aspects of its culture that members of the group want to preserve even in a period of rapid change and dislocation

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to address some complex issues from just one perspective. I am aware that there are different ways of enquiring into organisational and group cultures - for example, a different perspective would suggest that organisations *are* their culture rather than being composed of cultural sub-groups. The definition of culture which I have utilised would bear further analysis; for example, how is culture taught to group members? How do they learn it? Other research methods such as gathering visual data, group diary-keeping, encouraging 'conversational' writing would bear experimentation in seeking to acknowledge and uncover the ways in which a changing culture may affect the overall workings of an organisation.

Ultimately, my plea is for researchers in higher education to look for new frameworks, to discover new perspectives, to clarify new research orientations and to devise new methodological quests as higher education itself attempts to come to terms with its changing environment. Organisation theory may have much to offer us in this respect.

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SCUTREA'S metamorphosis: the impact of practices and contexts on SCUTREA's identity

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SCUTREA's annual conference is its main activity and therefore the primary expression of its members concerns and values. Its conference proceedings provide the major (if not only) material for studying SCUTREA's collective and changing identity over the last twenty-four years. Through its role as the main adult education research conference in Britain, SCUTREA offers a unique opportunity for examining the changing face of the study of the education of adults.

Any account of an organisation's history and development told from within will inevitably be marked by the particular concerns of the individual; the 'reality' of events will be reflected and refracted by a person's own lens of experience and, of course, the individual will in turn be affected by the events taking place. In my case, my view of SCUTREA is strongly influenced by my own history both within SCUTREA and within my world as a continuing education specialist. On reflection, I realise that these two elements are inextricably linked - the enormous changes in my worklife outside SCUTREA have had a direct impact on my involvement in the organisation, and many of the changes I have faced (such as the move from being an extramural tutor to being a continuing education specialist) are mirrored within SCUTREA. This paper is an account of the organisation's development which draws on the conference proceedings over the last twenty-four years and my own knowledge of SCUTREA over the last twelve.

In the light of my comments above, I begin with an account of my own involvement and then, using the proceedings as a basis for my research, I look at SCUTREA's evolving identity by analysing the conference proceedings in terms of the number of contributions and profile of contributors. I finally explore the external influences on SCUTREA and the impact of those influences on the organisation and its conference structure.

Personal history

I first attended a SCUTREA conference in 1982, to be launched with Nod Miller into the limelight by representing the women's group at a plenary session. Our complaints - that SCUTREA was a male dominated, patriarchal organisation - fell on sensitive ears (in both senses of the word!), judging by the changes in the organisation since then. Despite the overt sexism of the organisation, as an extramural tutor whose subject specialism was psychology, I felt comfortable with the talk of adult education research and teaching. In 1984, I was elected to the position of Honorary Secretary (the practice then was for the Chair and Secretary to work in the same institution and thus my illustrious position was due rather more to the incoming Chair than my talents) and served for three years. I was then a member of Council until 1993 when I was elected Chair. Since 1982, I have attended most Council meetings, been on the planning committee for most conferences and have attended all but one conference.

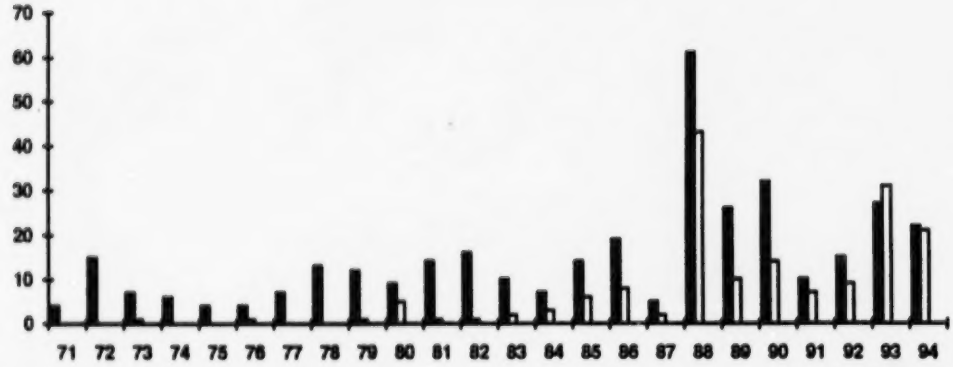
Analysis of conference proceedings and presenters

Since I joined SCUTREA, its annual conference has changed beyond recognition for reasons that I explore shortly. For example, in 1982 eleven papers were presented. This year, more than three times that number are available. At the earlier conference, only one of the presenters was a woman, despite the fact that women made up a quarter of the audience. This year, almost half the presenters are women. In 1982, only nine institutions were represented by the presenters compared with eighteen this year.

Although many of the early proceedings provided information about participants, once they were published before the conference, this was impossible to do and it is therefore not possible to analyse the participants by gender and institution. The early proceedings show that women formed a tiny minority of the participants with only one woman out of thirty-eight participants at the first conference. However, it is possible to analyse presenters in terms of gender and the chart below shows the numbers of men and women presenting at each conference (the men are represented in black). One can assume that this pattern is also reflected in terms of participants.

The proceedings show that SCUTREA might have been caricatured in its early days as a small, essentially extramural, conference whose concern was to encourage and support research on the education of adults (which was mostly taken to mean the extramural world) and whose method of

Presenters at SCUTREA by gender



paper selection appeared to be based on pressure and coercion (aside from the odd willing contributor). In contrast, SCUTREA now has an early call for papers, a refereed selection system and so many papers in the proceedings that contributors have to be restricted to 2000 words. These changes can be explained by looking at four sources of influence: changes in British extramural provision and the move towards a 'learning society' model[1], contact with North American colleagues; moves within SCUTREA towards a more explicitly democratic and inclusive organisation and changes in the nature of research in the education of adults.

Changes in British extramural provision

Perhaps the greatest change in what is now called university continuing education has been the move away from dedicated extramural departments whose explicit mission was to deliver the services of the university to the surrounding communities. Instead, continuing education departments and units now exist whose raisons d'être are to promote the interests of adults across a spectrum of higher education and even, in some cases, further education (for example, through the delivery of Access courses)[2]. The very rapid expansion of higher education, particularly in part-time provision, and the resulting increase in adult participation has also undermined the unique mission of continuing education departments[3] With the disappearance of the binary divide between universities and polytechnics and the extension of the polytechnic tradition of integrated continuing education, arguments about a distinctive extramural role now seem rather outdated. This change of focus can be seen in the move in the SCUTREA proceedings away from a concern with the extramural world, to a much broader focus on topics which relate across the whole field of continuing education (for example, the identities of adult students, knowledge and competence, delivery systems, accreditation, research methodologies[4], ethical issues, etc.).

Alongside this macro-change, the increasing focus on research selectivity by funding councils has forced continuing education departments to demonstrate the productivity of their staff. In contrast with the situation outlined by Teddy Thomas in his paper on SCUTREA where he records the 'diminution of research activity on the part of university extramural departments'[5], the current pressure to publish has created an unprecedented demand for respectable outlets for research.[6] The move in SCUTREA towards a refereed system with much tighter control over contributions to the annual conference reflects both the necessity of demonstrating the organisation's respectability and the popularity of the conference as an outlet for researchers in the field.

A third influence worth noting was the recent injection of money into continuing education departments over the last eight years for the funding of what were initially known as 'innovative projects' and later became research projects. Through this special funding, a new generation of continuing education researchers was created and this also accounts in part for the recent flood of papers to SCUTREA and to journals such as *Studies in the Education of Adults*

North American influences

A rather different source of change arrived from the West in the shape of a venture entitled BANANAEE[7]. Briefly, the Kellogg Foundation funded a two-stage exchange between North American and British academics who were relatively new to the profession. North American colleagues came to SCUTREA while British individuals participated in the North American

adult education conferences. The exchange groups also visited departments in each other's countries. The final outcome of the exchange was a joint conference held in Leeds in 1988[8] sponsored by SCUTREA, the Adult Education Research Conference or AERC (the US equivalent of SCUTREA) and the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education or CASAE (its Canadian equivalent). The organisers combined the North American traditions of an open call for papers, a refereeing system and the publication of proceedings at the conference rather than afterwards, together with SCUTREA's own movement towards a more active and participative style of conference with the minimum of ceremony. The conference had far-reaching consequences for SCUTREA. SCUTREA's Council realised that it was possible to open up the organisation through the call for papers - people would respond, provided the theme was broad enough. It also seemed much more sensible to publish the papers at the conference since it ensured that presenters would write them. Furthermore, with the pressures to publish and the increasing number of individuals who would identify themselves as CE researchers, the system seemed to be both fair and efficient. Since 1988, all but one of SCUTREA's conferences have followed this same format.

SCUTREA's relationships and values

Over the last twenty four years, SCUTREA's relationships and values have become more explicit. Initially, the organisation developed in a somewhat antagonistic atmosphere because it wanted only to include those universities involved in teaching and research in adult education - 'Membership would inevitably be exclusive, and this led to some resentment which unfortunately was institutionalised in hostility from the UCAE [now UACE] towards SCUTREA'[9]. Although the organisation rebelled against the image of an elite club of individuals, it had its own particular brand of exclusivity as demonstrated earlier. For example, under its rules, it would simply have not been possible to include the current Honorary Secretary as a member, since he does not work for a university. Following a change in the constitution in 1988 which widened membership categories, the membership of SCUTREA has expanded rapidly so that it now has twenty-seven institutional members and twenty-five individual members.

Much more recently, relationships with UCACE and now UACE have proved mutually beneficial. After some discussion about SCUTREA coming under the umbrella of UACE[10], a common understanding and some cross representation between the two organisations means that UACE's research committee is mainly concerned with policy, while SCUTREA remains the main conference about research on adult education, broadly defined.

SCUTREA's values are reflected through its conference structures. The early conference structures reflected a conservative and perhaps uncritical approach to such events. In answer to the criticism that adult educators should practise what they preached and make conferences a more participative experience, the first attempts at breaking down the tyranny of the plenary (in 1985) proved highly successful. Other examples left over from the gentlemen's club traditions (the after-dinner speaker, the opening addresses and other such formalities) were challenged in the 1980s and often rejected. The institution of a conference planning group, consisting not only of the conference secretary and the officers but also other interested parties, expanded both participation in the planning process and the network of those encouraging contributions.

Finally, the launch of the newsletter, *SCOOP*, in 1990 offered the first real opportunity for SCUTREA members to keep in touch throughout the year.

Nature of research in the education of adults

The conference proceedings chart a remarkable picture of the changes in the nature of research in the education of adults. As an example, the first proceedings include papers on the history of adult education and on student attrition rates for university extension courses. There is some evidence in those early conferences of an attempt to define good research in terms of quantitative research (in line with much social science research at the time). Later conferences demonstrate the rise in popularity of theoretical, policy-oriented and qualitative approaches to research, while the most recent include examples of post-modern influences[11]. As with other educational research[12], continuing/adult education research is not defined by a distinctive paradigm. It is not immune to changes in research and theoretical fashions. Its researchers inevitably use the tools of their parent disciplines to explore and answer research questions.

In the light of our current knowledge about the great diversity of approaches to research in the education of adults, Thomas's 1984 defence of adult education books that were 'not the outcome of research in the sense in which statisticians would understand it, [but] are nevertheless important because they intellectualise about adult education and give the subject depth'[13] seems completely unnecessary.

Conclusion

The conference proceedings provide an intriguing view of an organisation that is rapidly changing in response to external influence and membership desires. SCUTREA continues to be an independent body which strives to provide an opportunity for those interested in the study of the education of adults. The conference plenary will give participants the opportunity to discuss my analysis in the light of their experiences.

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[1]Frank Coffield's recent document launching a new ESRC research programme called *The Learning Society: Knowledge and Skills for Employment* (ESRC, 1994) defines a learning society as 'one in which all citizens acquire a high quality general education, appropriate vocational training a job (or series of jobs) worthy of a human being while continuing to participate in education and training throughout their lives' (p.2).

[2]Richard Taylor, 'The changing role of the professional in university continuing education' in Paul Armstrong, Barry Bright and Miriam Zukas (eds), *Reflecting on changing practices, contexts and identities: SCUTREA Conference Proceedings*, University of Leeds, 1994

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[4]Nod Miller and David Jones (eds), *Research: reflecting practice: papers from the 1993 SCUTREA Conference*, University of Manchester, 1993

[5]J.E.Thomas, 'Adult education, research and SCUTREA', *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 1985, vol. 17; p.74

[6]A recent change in the research assessment exercise to exclude quantitative information has been designed to reduce the pressure to publish as many papers as possible; instead each research active individual will submit up to four pieces to demonstrate the quality of their work. HEFCE, *1996 Research Assessment Exercise*, Circular RAE96 1/94, 1994

[7]British and North American Adult Education Exchange

[8]The birthplace of the Kellogg Cornflakes who will be reunited at the 1994 conference

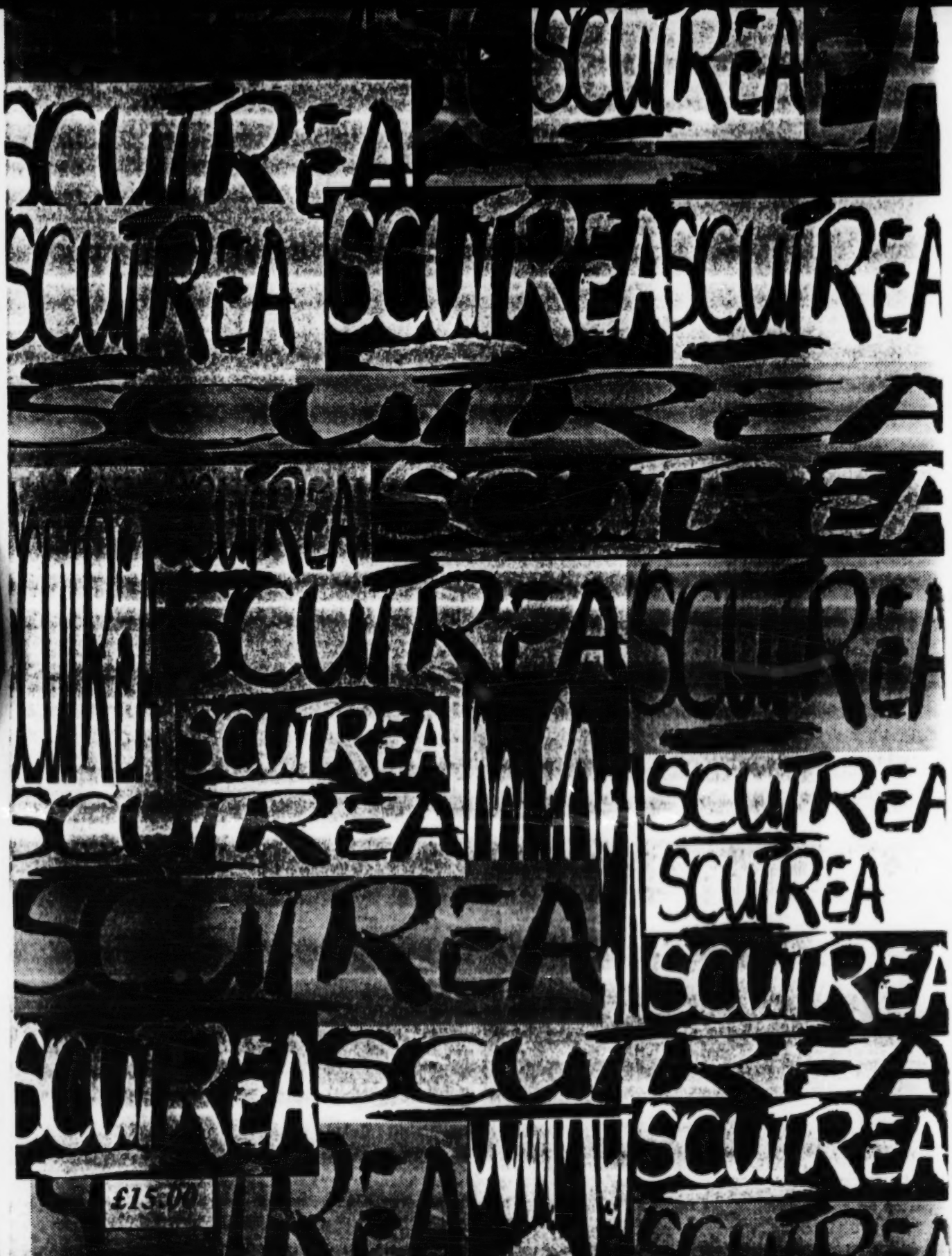
[9]Thomas p. 74

[10]This is aired in SCOOP (SCUTREA's newsletter), Issues 7 (Autumn, 1992) and 8 (Spring, 1993)

[11]Examples of post-modern approaches include the paper by Richard Edwards and Robin Usher, 'Tribes and tribulations: narratives and multiple identities of adult educators' in Paul Armstrong, Barry Bright and Miriam Zukas (eds), Reflecting on changing practices, contexts and identities: SCUTREA Conference Proceedings, University of Leeds, 1994

[12]This is discussed fully in the Report by the Working Party on the future of Research in Education to the Economic and Social Research Council, *Frameworks and priorities for research in education: towards a strategy for the ESRC*, ESRC 1992

[13]Thomas, p. 76



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